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A DISCOURSE OF Divine Assistance,

Geo: Barlee

AND THE

METHOD THEREOF:

Shewing what Assistance Men receive from God, in performing the Condition of the Promise of Pardon of Sin and Eternal Life.

By *W. A.*

Phil. 2. 12, 13. *Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling: for it is God which worketh in you, both to will and to do, of his good pleasure.*

Matth. 13. 12. *Whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance.*

LONDON,

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Grysell Baillie
London 1718

THE PREFACE TO THE READER.

MUch indeed hath been written of the Divine Aſſiſtance in parts, and upon occaſion of handling other Doctrines, ſuch as Repentance, Faith, Regeneration, &c. But yet I cannot ſay, That much hath been done by any entire and ſet Diſcourſe upon this Subject, eſpecially not upon God's preventing Grace and preparatory Aſſiſtance; which yet is one branch of the whole, and hugely neceſſary to be well underſtood and conſidered. Upon which account I cannot but think that ſomething further of this nature, though but vulgarly done, may

be of good uſe to Vulgar capacities, who can better underſtand this great Doctrine when they ſee the parts put together, and how they relate to, and depend one upon another, than otherwiſe they can.

And therefore the better to prepare the Reader for the enſuing Diſcourſe, I ſhall inſtance in ſome few things, to ſhew the uſefulneſs of a clear and diſtinct underſtanding of the Nature and Method of Divine Aſſiſtance, and the terms on which it may be expected.

And firſt, touching the Method *of God's aſſiſtance. It is endeavoured in the following Diſcourſe, to ſhew, That God by his preventing Grace uſually begins with Men, in aſſiſting them towards Performance of the Condition of the Promiſe, by raiſing in them a* ſenſe *of their guilt and danger, and by awakening their fear; and all to ſtir them up to apply themſelves to the remedy. For Fear being a moſt powerful Principle and Spring of Action, when any thing ſtrong, will, if any thing will, put them upon*

upon endeavours to provide for their own ſafety. But if Men be ignorant and unacquainted with this Method of God's aſſiſtance, they will be in much danger of taking theſe firſt operations of God upon their minds, to be but like other thoughts which come and go there, without being much taken notice of: or elſe but for a fit of Melancholy, to be withſtood and ſtriven againſt; and ſo unawares they may quench the Spirit, under the Notion of removing Melancholy Thoughts. Whereas, if they were made ſenſible of the Nature of God's preparatory Aſſiſtance, they would probably be more afraid to ſlight ſuch working of their thoughts, leſt, in doing ſo, they ſhould ſlight the warning of God himſelf, and the ſafety of their own Souls.

The knowledge of this Method of God's Aſſiſtance, ſerves alſo to direct thoſe who labour the converſion of Souls, and to help on the Work of Repentance in Men, frequently to inculcate upon the minds of Unreformed Sinners, ſuch Arguments and Conſiderations as are apt

and proper to make them ſenſible of their guilt and danger, and to awaken their fears. For when by their doing ſo, theſe applications from without, by the Word, meet with God's Applications to the mind by his Spirit within, the operation will be ſo much the more powerful, and the more likely to prevail.

And becauſe Men are too apt to diſcharge themſelves of ſuch fears as much as they can, by ſome vain and deluſive reaſonings in their minds: and becauſe a reſolution to become new Men hereafter, though they delay it for the preſent, is one of them; therefore to prevent this, the greatneſs of the folly, and the greatneſs of the danger of ſuch a delay, ſhould be ſtrenuouſly urged upon them, as a Folly ſo great, that the folly of thoſe that ſee their whole Eſtates, or their Lives in apparent danger, and yet do not make all the haſte they can to ſecure them, is no folly in compariſon of this. For they are not only in danger thereby of being eternally loſt, by being ſnatched away under ſuch a delay, but alſo of being deprived of all Divine Aſ-

ſiſtance

ſiſtance for the future, although they ſhould live never ſo long. For from him that hath not (i. e. *hath not uſed that which he firſt had*) ſhall be taken away that which he hath, *ſaith our Saviour.*

Bad Men are apt to flatter and deceive themſelves with this Opinion alſo, viz. *That they have no power to be better, or to perform the Condition of the Promiſe, nor never had, and that they cannot be better till God give them of his Grace to be ſo, by giving them more power to that end, than ever yet he gave them: and that it is not conſiſtent with his Mercy, nor with his Juſtice, neither to deſtroy Men for not doing that which he never gave them power to do: from both which together, they are apt to conclude themſelves in a ſafe Condition, eſpecially conſidering, That Chriſt died for them, though otherwiſe they are apparently vicious in their lives.*

But if they would but underſtand the Method and Order of Divine Aſſiſtance, and the Nature and Terms of it, they would

would find themſelves under a great and dangerous miſtake. For the very Reaſon which they urge as part of the ground of their confidence of the ſafeneſs of their Condition, viz. *That it is not conſiſtent with the Mercy, nor with the Juſtice of God, to deſtroy Men for not doing that which he never gave them power to do, is a ſtrong Argument to prove, That he doth give ſuch Men whom he deſtroys before he deſtroys them, power to do that, for the not doing of which he doth deſtroy them; and conſequently, That he hath given ſuch bad Men, as reaſon, as aforeſaid, power to have been better, and that therefore the mercifulneſs of God can be no ſecurity to them of not being deſtroyed, until they become better. If this were not ſo, it would follow, That either none ſhould periſh, or that it is inconſiſtent with the Mercy and Juſtice of God that they do, according to the tenour of theſe Mens reaſoning. Both which are equally falſe, and the latter blaſphemous alſo. And therefore it is a deceitful and abſurd way of reaſoning, for ſuch Men to conclude, That the reaſon why they*

are

are no better, is, becauſe God hath not given them power to be ſo.

It is true indeed God hath not given power unto Men that are bad, to have been better neceſſarily and unavoidably; for if he had, they could not have been ſo bad as now they are. Nor do I ſay, That God hath given Men ſuch an immediate power to do all that which belongs unto a compleat performance of the Condition of the Promiſe, but he gives them a remote power to do it, by giving them an immediate power to begin it. And if they do but make uſe of this power, by an actual beginning to perform this Condition, as they may, God will then give them ſo much more of it, as whereby they may finiſh it, unleſs they refuſe to make uſe of it. So that if Men do not perform the Condition of the Promiſe, it is not for want of power, but for want of making uſe of that power which God hath already given them by his preventing Grace; otherwiſe their deſtruction would not be of themſelves, which yet it is, as all grant.

There

There are none but upon that awakening which they have had from God one way, and one time or other, might out of a dread of him, and of his wrath revealed from Heaven againſt all Ungodlineſs and Unrighteouſneſs of men, have begun to reform and to become leſs ſinful by leaving off ſome ill practices; and they would have found they could have done ſo, in caſe they had been ſure they ſhould have loſt their Lives or Eſtates preſently if they had not. Though they had not power all on a ſudden to become good, yet they had power through God's preventing grace not to have been ſo bad. The worſt of men doubtleſs had power before ſuch time as by their obſtinacy and oppoſition againſt God and his dealing with them they ſinned it away, to have reformed in part: which to have done out of a dread of God, would have been a beginning to repent, and ſo a beginning to perform the Condition of the promiſe of pardon. The Men of Nineveh *by the awakening of their fears by the preaching of* Jonah, *could we ſee* turn from their evil ways,

and

and in particular, from the violence that was in their hands, *Jonah* 3. 8, 10. *And by the ſame aſſiſtance and power by which Men may become leſs bad, they may be able alſo to make more uſe than they have done of the means of Grace, and to become poſitively better thereby to a degree. Which if they do and do not by ſeeking out vain Reaſonings and Evaſions, obliterate that* ſenſe *by which they began to be better, God will ſupply them with more power to proceed in the Work of* Reformation, *until it come to a Work of* Renovation *of the whole Man, both in Heart and Life, and therein unto a performance of the Condition of the promiſe.*

And as it is, we ſee, matter of great moment that the people be made to underſtand the Method of Divine Aſſiſtance, ſo is it of no leſs concernment for them to underſtand upon what terms it may be expected; as whether upon previous conditions or without. For if it be not to be expected but upon conditions to be performed on our part, and yet we think otherwiſe, we ſhall be in extream great danger

of

of depriving our ſelves of that aſſiſtance, by neglecting what belongs to us, to make our ſelves capable of it.

And therefore for a right underſtanding of this matter, we muſt diſtinguiſh between ſuch an aſſiſtance as is only preparatory to a farther aſſiſtance, and that by means of which the condition of the Promiſe is compleatly performed. And if we do, we ſhall find that the preparatory aſſiſtance is indeed afforded unto Men without any condition at all, ſave what our Saviour hath performed by his Mediatorial obedience to obtain it for us. And this Preparatory Aſſiſtance is that which we call God's Preventing Grace, becauſe by it he prevents all endeavours on our part to make our ſelves capable of it. For he is aforehand with us in giving us the Goſpel, and the Miniſtry of it, who live where it is; and ſo he is by his ſecret operations upon our minds to make us ſenſible of our danger, thereby to ſtir us up to bethink our ſelves how we may eſcape it: And all this before we do any thing our ſelves with an intent to raiſe ſuch a ſenſe or conſideration in our ſelves. But

But although God's Preparatory Aſſiſtance and Preventing Grace is vouchſafed unto Men without any condition, yet his farther *Aſſiſtance is promiſed but upon condition of making uſe of his* former. *When God hath been at work in Mens minds to make them ſenſible of the danger of their ſinful ſtate and bad tendency of their evil ways, and hath laid before them how they may eſcape it; if yet they will not make ſo much uſe of all this, as thereupon to concern themſelves more than they had done about the affairs of their Souls and another World, they can have no reaſon to promiſe themſelves any* further *aſſiſtance from God; nor can they be ſure to have any repetition of the firſt. For our Saviour hath told us, ſaying,* What meaſure ye mete, it ſhall be meaſured unto you: And to you that hear, more ſhall be given, *Mark* 4. 24. *According to what meaſure we mete in the attendance, or non-attendance of our minds to make uſe of thoſe Aids and Aſſiſtances which God affords us, it will be meaſured to us in affording, or not affording us more.*

And

And when he ſays, that unto you that hear, more ſhall be given, we cannot underſtand more thereby, than that the promiſe of more aſſiſtance is made, but only to ſuch as do attend to what God hath already admoniſhed them of, and who have ſo far taken into conſideration what he hath ſaid or done to them by his Word, and by his Works of Providence without, and by the awakening operations of his Spirit within, as not to ſlight them, but to be inclined thereby to be more mindful and ſolicitous about their Salvation, than ever they were before.

And that our Saviour's words aforeſaid, To you that hear, more ſhall be given, *are to be underſtood in a conditional ſenſe; that is, that more ſhall be given upon condition of attending to what had been done before, is evident by his next words,* Verſe 25. For he that hath, to him more ſhall be given; and he that hath not, from him ſhall be taken away even that which he hath: *That is, (as will be ſhewed in the following Diſcourſe) from him that hath not uſed and improved*

improved that which was first given him, shall be taken away that which he already had, rather than have any more given him. By which Assertion of our Saviour, it appears, That this is a Law of Heaven, a Rule, which Almighty God is resolved ordinarily to observe, in dispensing his Assistances unto Men, that those who do not make some good use of this preventing Grace, *his former Assistance, shall, after some time of trial, have that suspended, and the current of it stopt. As, on the other hand, they that do, shall have more of it given them. And if they make a good use of that* more *also, they shall have more added to that other more, a second degree of Assistance added to the first, and a third to the second, and so on. For God is and will be leading the way, he will be aforehand with us in his Assistances; and if we do but follow him in our Endeavours to make use of them, he will still afford us more and more, until he hath carried us up to a good degree towards Perfection. He is still working in us to will and to do; that is, to will*

better and to do better, by aſſiſting us ſo to do: and if we do but work too, as he expects we ſhould, by making uſe of his Aſſiſtances to work out our own Salvation, the great buſineſs of our Salvation will go on proſperouſly.

This, I doubt not, is the Truth *which lies in the middle way, between the two contrary Extreams of* Pelagianiſm *on the one hand, and the Opinion of* Irreſiſtible *Grace on the other; into one of which, Men will be in great danger to fall, if they do not underſtand the Nature and Terms of Divine Aſſiſtance.*

The right underſtanding and due conſideration of this Doctrine of Divine Aſſiſtance, is very neceſſary alſo, to make us all thoroughly ſenſible, *how much the Work of Grace from the beginning to its greateſt Growth and Perfection, depends upon the Divine* Aids. *Though it is not God's Method to convert Men without their own endeavours, and uſe of the Means appointed and vouchſafed by him,*

yet

yet the ſucceſs of ſuch endeavours depends upon the concurrent operation and influence of the Spirit of God. Paul *may Plant, and* Apollos *Water, and we likewiſe uſe our endeavours, but yet it is* God that gives the increaſe, *and cauſes them to proſper. Nay, it is God, who by his Preventing Grace does firſt excite in us that, from which all our endeavours of this nature do ſpring: For it is* God that worketh in us to will and to do of his good pleaſure, *Phil.* 2. 13.

Whatever therefore our endeavours may be, and how excellent ſoever the External means are which are vouchſafed us for the begetting or increaſing of Grace, yet it is not ſafe to depend upon theſe for either (otherwiſe than as they are means by which God conveys his Grace to us) but upon the gracious and powerful operation of God by thoſe means. And that is the reaſon why in the uſe of all means, we are to ſeek unto God by Prayer, for ſomewhat beyond what he hath put into the means or inſtruments of Grace only as ſuch. Hence building up our ſelves in

our moſt Holy Faith, and praying in the Holy Ghoſt, *are joined together*, Jude 20. *What made the Goſpel to make ſo ſtrange an alteration in the World on a ſudden as it did in the minds and manners of Men upon its firſt ſetting forth after our Saviour's Aſcenſion? But that mighty preſence of the Spirit that accompanied it unto the minds of Men. We cannot ſay it was only becauſe of the Miracles that kept pace with it, which yet were wrought by the power of the Spirit. For how little did the numerous and marvelous Miracles of our Saviour prevail, (though he ſpake alſo as never Man ſpake) until the time came that the Spirit was poured out in greater abundance, as well on the Hearers as on the Preachers of the Goſpel. The Apoſtles in their ſpiritual Warfare did indeed* pluck down ſtrong holds, caſt down imaginations, and every high thing that exalted it ſelf againſt the knowledge of God; *but it was becauſe the* Weapons of their Warfare were mighty through God; *that is, through the mightineſs of his*

his operation that went along with them, 2 Cor. 10. 4, 5.

And as the ſenſe *of how much the Work of Grace depends upon the Divine Aſſiſtance, proceeds from the knowledge and conſideration of the* nature *of it; ſo our* Application *to God, and* Dependence *upon him for it, depends upon the ſame knowledge and ſenſe alſo. For unleſs men have ſome knowledge and ſenſe, as of their need of Grace, and of the neceſſity of their performing the condition of the Promiſe in order to their obtaining the benefits promiſed, ſo unleſs they have ſome ſenſe alſo of the neceſſity of Divine Aſſiſtance to perform that condition, and of the terms on which they may have it, they will neither deſire theſe things, nor uſe God's appointed means to obtain them, nor depend upon him for them in the uſe of means. But by how much the more ſenſe they have of their need of theſe things, and of God's willingneſs to aſſiſt them in the uſe of means for the obtaining them, and of his willingneſs to confer them upon ſuch terms, by ſo much*

will they apply themſelves to God for them, and to the uſe of the means by which he conveys them, and in doing ſo depend upon him for them. And by how much they do thus, by ſo much they are likely to be filled with the Spirit, *and to be taken out of the ſpirit of the World, and to be acted by another Spirit, and to have their hearts lifted up in the way of the Lord. For the Holy Spirit will moſt certainly be given unto ſuch who out of a ſenſe of their great need of it, and of its excellency and uſefulneſs, do earneſtly, beg it of God, and depend upon him for it, in a conſcientious uſe of that aſſiſtance they have already received. For our bleſſed Saviour hath aſſured us that the* Heavenly Father will much more, and much ſooner give the Holy Spirit to thoſe that ask it, than earthly Parents will give good gifts unto their Children, *Luke* 11. 13. I love them that love me, and they that ſeek me early ſhall find me, *ſaith the Wiſdom of God, and is truly applicable unto the Spirit of God,* Prov. 8. 17.

And

And by how much we are made ſenſible that all our Chriſtian performances depend upon the Divine Aſſiſtance, by ſo much the leſs we are in danger of truſting in our own ſtrength, or of attributing them to our ſelves: And by ſo much we are likely alſo to aſcribe them all to God, *and to ſay with* David, Of thine own we have given thee, *and with the other Prophet,* Thou Lord haſt wrought all our Works in us; *and accordingly to love and to praiſe him for all his aids.*

And laſtly, The knowledge of the Doctrine of Divine Aſſiſtance, is of great uſe likewiſe to animate and hearten us in the way of our duty, againſt the diſcouragements we meet with in it, from the difficulties of performing it, and oppoſitions againſt us in it. For by the Doctrine of the Scriptures concerning Divine Aſſiſtance, we are aſſured, that if we do but in good earneſt ſet about our duty in performing the condition of the Promiſe, our ability to perform it will increaſe upon our hands, They that wait upon the Lord

ſhall renew their ſtrength; and to him that hath more ſhall be given, and he ſhall have abundance. *And by how much our ſtrength doth increaſe through the Divine Aſſiſtance, by ſo much the work will grow more and more eaſie, and the difficulty wear off. That which is with difficulty done by one, while he hath but the ſtrength of a Child, will be done with eaſe and pleaſure when he grows towards the ſtrength of a Man. And although we meet with oppoſition and temptation to turn us back again after we have ſet out, (and uſually the greateſt difficulty is found in our entrance upon the work, while we are unaccuſtomed to it, while our corruptions are yet ſtrong, and our ſtrength but little) yet if we do but hold on our way, and rally again as oft as we receive any Foils, we ſhall be ſure to overcome at laſt, and come off with compleat Victory;* Becauſe, *as S.* John *ſaith,* greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the World. *And though our* beginning be but ſmall, yet our latter end ſhall greatly increaſe. *It is ſaid of our bleſſed Saviour,* that a bruiſed Reed he

ſhall

ſhall not break, and ſmoaking Flax he ſhall not quench, until he ſend forth judgment unto victory.

And thus we ſee how very much depends upon the due knowledge and underſtanding of the Nature and Method of Divine Aſſiſtance, and of the terms on which we may expect it.

The better underſtanding, and practical uſe of all, which by ſuch whoſe Abilities do not ſet them above it, is the deſign of the following Diſcourſe.

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OF

A DISCOURSE OF Divine Assistance.

CHAP. I.

How God prepares men towards performing the condition of the Promise, by causing Principles of Natural Religion to operate on the Mind.

ALmighty God and our Saviour have thus far prevented all endeavours of ours towards the bringing about our Salvation: The Father hath given his Son to be the Saviour of the World, and the Son hath given himself a Ransom for all, and tasted Death for every Man: and upon account of his Death and Passion, a Promise is made to all men of pardon of Sin and eternal Life, upon condition of Repentance, Faith, and

sincere Obedience. And God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, are not only ready, willing and desirous to *assist us to perform this condition*, but do actually assist even those towards it to a degree, and until that assistance is refused, opposed, and rejected, who yet perish for want only of performing that condition.

Now this Divine Assistance which men receive in performing the condition on which Pardon and Life are promised, is intended to be the subject matter of this Discourse. In the entrance upon which I shall suppose and take for granted, that the promise of the pardon of Sin and eternal Life, is conditional; and that Faith, Repentance, and sincere Obedience, make up the whole of this condition.

And that we may the better come to understand the nature, manner, and method of this *Divine Assistance*, I shall endeavour two things.

1. To shew what is done by God by way of *Preparation*, to prepare and dispose the minds of men to perform the condition of the Promise, in Repenting, Believeing, and in sincerely obeying the Gospel.

2. To shew what is done by God to assist them in that performance being so prepared.

That something is done by God by way of

of *Preparation*, without which no man does ſavingly believe in Chriſt, I gather from our Saviour's own words in *John* 6.44. *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath ſent me draw him.* And again, Ver.65. *Therefore ſaid I unto you, that no man can come to me, except it were given unto him of my Father.* And in Verſe 45. thus, *Every man therefore that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me.* Theſe ſayings of our Saviour ſhew that ſomething muſt be done upon men by God the Father, before they can repair to Chriſt, as to the great Maſter that hath the *words of eternal life*, as reſolving to be ruled and governed by his Doctrine and Precepts in ſeeking Salvation; or which is the ſame, before they can become his real and true Diſciples or Scholars in learning practically of him the way to Eternal Life: for that is it I underſtand by coming to Chriſt. And this, according to our Saviour's Doctrine, no Man can do, that is not firſt prepared for it by the Father, by hearing and learning of him, and by being drawn by him.

Now what effect upon the Soul that is, or what temper of mind it is which is cauſed by the Father's teaching, and which does prepare men ſo as that they come to Chriſt thereupon, is not here ſaid in the fore-cited words of our Saviour. But we

may be able to make some judgment of it, after two or three things are considered, which our Saviour's words direct us to.

1. It is not Faith it self, as having Christ for its object. For coming to Christ, or believing in him, is the effect of that temper of mind which is wrought by the Father's teaching and drawing here spoken of, or at least is consequent to it.

2. This temper of mind wrought by the Father's teaching or operation, is such in the nature of it, as does incline and dispose men to come to Christ, and to believe in him, though it be not that coming to him it self, nor that believing in him. *For every man that hath heard and learned of the Father, does come to the Son.*

3. This temper of mind is such an effect, and that by which it is wrought such an act, as is most properly attributed unto God the Father. It is that which comes by mens learning of the *Father*, it is that by which the *Father* draws them.

These things considered, that temper of mind then which does most incline and dispose men to come to Christ and to believe in him, to embrace the grace offered through him and by him, and to submit to the terms on which it is offered, must needs be that effect upon the Soul which our Saviour here speaks of, without which no man can come to him. And

And this I conceive we ſhall find to be a *ſtrong ſenſe* upon the mind of the guilt of ſin, and of a liableneſs to God's wrath thereby, accompanied with a fear of it, and with anxiety of mind, about ones future ſtate after death, and likewiſe a ſenſe of the different tendency of moral righteouſneſs and goodneſs, and a teachable frame of ſpirit as the effect and conſequence of ſuch a *ſenſe*.

For that uneaſineſs of mind which the foreſaid ſenſe cauſeth, begets a teachable frame of Spirit, makes men willing to hearken to thoſe terms which are offered in the Goſpel, to free them from the foreſaid fears, pain, and anxiety of mind. The ſenſe I ſpeak of, and the pain cauſed thereby, prevails againſt thoſe *prejudices* by outweighing them, which men before and till then, had againſt thoſe terms, without ſubmitting to which, Pardon and Salvation are not to be had, and makes them willing to accept of them. Though while they are but in the way of preparation to perform the condition of the Promiſe, they are not come ſo far as to chuſe to ſubmit to that condition out of love to thoſe things of which it does conſiſt, yet their ſenſe of danger, and the pain of fear of falling under it, may incline them to think their ſubmitting to the condition of the

Promiſe much more tolerable and ſupportable than their ſenſe of danger, and pain of fear is, which is upon them; and that will diſpoſe them to take ſuch things into conſideration, as will in a little time reconcile their minds and wills to thoſe things in which the condition of the Promiſe doth conſiſt: and if it do but that, yet it is preparatory to that performance.

Now this *ſenſe* of guilt and danger, and of the better tendency of moral righteouſneſs and goodneſs, may be raiſed in the mind by the operation of principles of natural Religion, when God is pleaſed to ſet them home, and to make the force and power of them to be felt, as I ſhall after ſhew. And that may be the reaſon why all this preparatory work upon the mind, is aſcribed unto God the Father, as we ſee it is by our Saviour. For natural Religion and the effects of it upon the mind, are moſt properly aſcribed unto God the Father; and the reaſon is, becauſe natural Religion was planted by him in the nature of man before the Fall, while ſupernatural Religion by the Mediator had not yet any being in men. And preparation for Religion ſupernaturally revealed (as the Religion of believing in Chriſt is) may well be aſcribed unto our being taught by natural Religion,

Religion, becauſe Religion ſupernatural, is founded in that which is natural. Men muſt firſt believe the Being of God and his Attributes, before they can believe ſupernatural revelations to be from him, and ſo to be undoubtedly true. *He that comes to God, muſt believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him.* Heb. 11. 6.

Men may indeed be prepared by the Father to come to Chriſt, by ſome of the ſame Doctrines which our Saviour himſelf taught, when powerfully impreſt upon the mind, and yet this be done by principles of natural Religion, becauſe a great part of his Doctrine is the ſame with natural Religion; only natural Religion is more perceptible by his Doctrine, than while only in the dark minds of men. He came, as he himſelf ſays, *not to deſtroy, but to fill up the Law*; to make a more compleat diſcovery of the latitude and ſpirituality of the natural Law, than *Moſes* and all the Prophets had done, *Mat.* 5. 17. But the Father's teaching and drawing, mentioned by our Saviour, being but to prepare men to receive Principles purely Evangelical, it cannot reaſonably be thought to be done by ſuch, but by thoſe which are natural.

To believe then the Being of God and his Attributes, the Immortality of the Soul,

and a future state, the different tendency of moral good and evil, and the Rewards and Punishments in another World, are Principles of natural Religion. And a powerful impression of these Principles upon the minds of guilty Persons by Almighty God, hath a great tendency in it to prepare and dispose them for a belief of the Gospel, when made known to them with the evidence of its Divinity; and that in a double respect.

1. As they come to be convinced thereby of the guilt of sin, and of their obnoxiousness by that to the Wrath of Almighty God, and to be anxiously concerned in their own minds about their future state after Death.

2. As they come thereby to a sensible discerning of the nature and tendency of moral Righteousness and Goodness.

1. Such a powerful impression upon the mind, of Principles of natural Religion, as I have said, prepares men for a belief in Christ, as they come thereby to be convinced of their guiltiness and of their obnoxiousness by that unto the Wrath of Almighty God, and to be anxiously concerned in their own minds about their future state after Death.

The natural operation of natural Conscience, doth something to make men sensible

ſible of the guilt of ſin, and of their liableneſs to the Divine diſpleaſure thereby. St. *Paul*, ſpeaking of the Heathen that had not the Law, ſaith, That their *thoughts did accuſe them*, when ſin was committed againſt the dictates of the light and law of Nature; and that their *conſcience did bear them witneſs*, That ſuch accuſations were true, *they knew the judgment of God, That thoſe who did ſuch things were worthy of death*, *Rom.* 2. 15. and 1. 32. The conſequence of all which, when ſet home upon the mind by God, by a vigorous operation, muſt needs be diſquietneſs, fear, and anxiety of mind, and doubtful apprehenſions touching God's diſpleaſuee and the future ſtate.

And that the very Heathen were upon this account, in an uneaſie condition, and under diſquieting apprehenſions of the Divine diſpleaſure, appears by the many Sacrifices which they offered to atone God, and to appeaſe the clamour of their own Conſciences. And well might their condition be very uneaſie to their minds, while they were certain of their liableneſs to the Divine diſpleaſure, but ignorant and uncertain of any remedy againſt it. S. *Paul* deſcribes their condition to be ſuch as that they were *without hope*, *Epheſ.* 2. 12. that they *were darkneſs*, not knowing whither

ther they were going, or what would become of them at last. They had nothing of revealed Religion, whereby to know with any certainty, That God would pardon them upon Repentance. And therefore their future state must needs have hung in doubt before them, and have caused fear day and night.

From this fear and doubtfulness of mind doubtless it was, that besides their Sacrifices, they ran into so many other superstitions as they did, as hoping by them to appease the displeasure of God, and to make some compensation for their offences against him, as by punishing themselves for them by severities, which they exercised upon their own bodies, and sometimes upon their own children.

I mention these things, to shew in what anxiety of mind the very Heathen were, by reason of the operation of natural Conscience under the sense of their guilt of sin, and of their obnoxiousness to God thereby. And this sense, and these fears, as the effect of natural Conscience, were increased and heightned, as it pleased God by his secret operation upon the mind, to give weight unto them; as we may easily conceive, by what befel *Cain* and *Judas* in that case, when they were so unable as they were, to bear the lashings of their own Consciences. Nor

Nor could their Sacrifices give that eaſe to their guilty Conſciences which they ſought for by them, unleſs they could have diſcerned more of proportion in them, to the nature of the Immortal God which made Heaven and Earth, than they could with any great confidence fanſie there was, to make compenſation to him for their offences. Thoſe Sacrifices which the Jews offered from time to time, though by God's own appointment, could never make thoſe, for whom they were offered, *perfect as pertaining to the conſcience*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Heb.* 10. They could not *purge the conſcience* from thoſe fears and troubleſome apprehenſions which the ſenſe of the guilt of ſin raiſed in them. For which cauſe they, and not only ſinners of the Gentiles, *were through fear of death, all their life time ſubject unto bondage*, as not knowing for all thoſe Sacrifices, what the event and conſequence of Death might be unto guilty perſons obnoxious to God, *Heb.* 2. 15.

It is true indeed, theſe impreſſions of natural Religion, are not made by God on all men alike, and conſequently all are not alike awakened by them: though none, I preſume, are without fears and doubts, more or leſs, about their future ſtate, until they are cured of them, by living up

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to Principles of revealed Religion, or else by a desperate course of sinning, have sinned themselves into a kind of *reprobate mind*, and become *past feeling*. And then indeed they may through *fearedness of conscience*, come to have little or no feeling of those disquieting effects of the guilt of sin, whereof I speak.

But men do not come to this, until they have greatly neglected, and not attended to this teaching of the Father by impressions of natural Religion; not until they have been labouring to put all thoughts about their future state, and their liableness to God's displeasure out of their minds, that they might be no more troubled with them.

But when men will needs deal thus from time to time with God and themselves, and bid God himself and all serious thoughts about another World, depart from them; then indeed God many times withdraws his secret way of working upon their minds by powerful impressions of natural Religion, (yea, and of revealed Religion too in like case) and leaves them to fall into that spiritual *slumber or sleep* St. *Paul* speaks of, *Rom.* 11. 8. By which sleep the inward senses of their Souls are bound up, as the bodily senses in bodily sleep are; so that they no more hear, see, feel,

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or perceive in a ſpiritual ſenſe, what God ſays or does to them, than a man in a natural ſleep does perceive, what is ſpoken or done to him.

But this is not the caſe of thoſe whom the Father by his teaching draws to Chriſt: he keeps their Conſcience waking, and makes ſin uneaſie to them by the fears it raiſes in their minds, of what may be the event of all at laſt.

Now ſuch an operation of God upon the mind, as I have been ſpeaking of, hath certainly a tendency in it to draw men to Chriſt, when ſufficiently revealed, and to make them willing to receive the Goſpel, and to become his Diſciples.

And the reaſon hereof is taken from the *ſuitableneſs* that is between the minds of men ſo affected, and the Goſpel. Men ſo prepared by the Father's teaching, are ſenſible of the troubleſome and dangerous condition into which Sin hath brought them. And nothing can be more acceptable to ſuch, than a diſcovery and offer of that which will give eaſe unto their troubled thoughts and doubtful minds; and this the Goſpel of Chriſt is exactly fitted and provided to do.

This Goſpel diſcovers unto them, that the guilt of ſin, as to the penal part, is taken away by the Son of God, and by his ſuffer-

ſuffering for them. This Goſpel contains a Proclamation from Heaven, publiſhing and declaring God's willingneſs upon the acount of his Son's ſuffering for them, to be reconciled to, and to pardon all ſinners whatſoever, that will but ceaſe from their wilful rebellion againſt him, and come under his Son's moſt gentle and gracious government, his eaſie yoke, and light burden.

Such good news as this, was a *ſuitable good*, to ſuch as were before under doubts and fears, Whether God would not prove an enemy to them at laſt, who had carried it as enemies to him all along, and avenge himſelf on them for their oppoſition againſt him. This is a *good* ſo *ſuitable* to ſuch, That nothing could give eaſe to their minds like it. All the things this World affords, can no more do it, than ſilver and gold can eaſe the pain of hunger and thirſt, when food is denied. It is the ſuitableneſs of the Goſpel, and a mind ſo prepared, as I have ſhewed, that draws men to Chriſt, when the Goſpel reveals him for ſuch a Saviour as he is.

This is that which makes the very Meſſengers, which bring the glad tidings of the Goſpel, acceptable to ſuch for their meſſage ſake. *How beautiful*, ſaith St. *Paul*, *are the feet of them which preach the Goſpel of Peace, and bring glad tidings of good things?*

things? Rom. 10. 15. And how beautiful were his feet in the eyes of the *Galatian* Gentiles, when he firſt brought the Goſpel among them? who before were in fear and doubt about their future ſtate and without hope: I ſay, how beautiful were his feet upon this account, when they *received him as an Angel of God, yea, as Chriſt Jeſus*, as he himſelf ſaith, and counted *the bleſſedneſs* ſo great, that, as he ſays, *they could, if it had been poſſible, have plucked out their own eyes, and have given them unto him*, Gal. 4. 14, 15.

The news of ſuch a Saviour, as the Goſpel declares him to be, is to ſuch as are in darkneſs and anxiety of mind, concerning their future ſtate after Death, like the Day-Star and Riſing Sun to ſuch as have been in the uncomfortableneſs of a gloomy and dark Night. Hence he is ſtiled the *bright and Morning-Star*, the *Day-Spring from on high*, the *Sun of Righteouſneſs that does ariſe with healing in his wings*.

The Angel which firſt publiſhed the Birth of Chriſt to the Shepherds, ſaid, *Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which ſhall be to all People*, *Luke* 2.10. And ſo the Goſpel hath proved to be, eſpecially to thoſe who have been prepared to receive it, by being concerned in their

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own minds how they should do to be saved. Thus when our Saviour preached the Gospel first in *Galilee*, it is said, That *then the People saw a great light, and to them who sate in the region of the shadow of death, light was sprung up*, *Matth.* 4. So such as were *pricked* in their hearts through a sense of guilt and danger, *gladly received* the Word, which brought them tidings of remission of sin through Christ upon Repentance, *Acts* 2. 37, 42. Thus again, When the Gospel was first preached in *Samaria*, it is said, *there was great joy in that City*, *Acts* 8. The Gentiles also when they had the Gospel first preached unto them at *Antioch, they were glad, and glorified the Word of the Lord*, Acts 13. 47.

The Gospel was not so welcome to all where it came; and what was the reason it was not as well as to others? The reason was, Because they had not learned by the Father's teaching, as some had done, but stifled the operations of natural Light in their minds, and had laboured to lay their Consciences asleep again, after at any time they had been awakened by God. They laboured to put thoughts about their future state out of their minds, because they found them troublesome unto them. *They closed their eyes and stopped their ears* against any thing that tended to awaken them.

But

But all did not ſo, but remained thoughtful about their future ſtate after Death, when God once had awakened them by ſtrong impreſſions of natural Religion to be concerned in their own minds about it. And they were ſuch as theſe who were wont to receive the Goſpel, and believe it when it came among them. As we ſee for inſtance in thoſe Gentiles to whom *Paul* and *Barnabas* preached, *Acts* 13. 48. For it is ſaid of them, *As many as were ordained to eternal life, believed.* Or, as others from the Greek read it, *As many as were diſpoſed to,* or *for eternal life, believed:* that is, as I, after others, underſtand it, As many as were ordered, or whoſe thoughts were ordered, and minds diſpoſed for Eternal Life; that is, to look after Eternal Life, theſe were the People that believed.

And indeed the Goſpel was deſign'd in chief, as it ſhould ſeem, for thoſe whoſe hearts and minds are bruiſed or broken with fears and cares about their Salvation. For thus run the words of that Prophecy which was fulfilled in the Publication of the Goſpel by Chriſt. *The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, becauſe he hath anointed me to preach the Goſpel to the Poor, he hath ſent me to heal the broken hearted, to preach deliverance to the Captives, and recovery of ſight to the blind, to ſet at liberty them that are bruiſed*

sed to preach the acceptable year of the Lord, *Luke* 4. 18, 19. Which is true, not only in respect of those that are bruised and broken in heart with godly sorrow for Sin, but also in respect of such whose hearts and minds are bruised and battered with fears and terrours, in reference to that misery to which they stand exposed for Sin.

And it is further considerable to our purpose, that those which our Saviour invites to come to him, and promiseth them *rest* if they do, are such as *labour and are heavy laden*; that *labour under*, *and are laden* with anxious thoughts and cares about their future state; for they are a wearisom burden to the mind, *Mat.* 11. 28. And again, *If any man thirst*, *let him come to me and drink*, saith our Saviour, *John* 7. 37. and *let him that is athirst come*, Rev. 22. 17. to wit, such as lack and long for some cooling and refreshing to their minds and spirits which are heated and inflamed with anxious thoughts and cares about the condition of their Souls for the future, when they shall leave the body. For this Invitation is made to such as were not yet come to Christ, had not yet truly believed in him: For a true belief in him quencheth this kind of thirst. And therefore our Saviour saith, *he that believeth in me*, *shall never thirst*, John 6. 35. And again, *Whosoever*

ſoever drinketh of the water which I ſhall give him, ſhall never thirſt, John 4. 14. This water when once well drunk of, quencheth that flame which before burnt up the Spirits.

Again, to ſhew what preparation of mind is neceſſary to make us prize Chriſt when offered, and willing to be governed by him in order to our cure and eaſe, conſider that ſaying of our Saviour, *Mat.* 9. 12. *The Whole need not the Phyſician, but the Sick*; to wit, ſuch as are *ill at eaſe in their own minds*, for that is the meaning of the Metaphor, I conceive. Other than ſuch have not a ſenſe of their need of a Phyſician, nor will care to be governed by his Methods of Phyſick. Which was the reaſon why our Saviour choſe rather to be among Publicans and Sinners than Phariſees: for thoſe being more ſenſible of their obnoxiouſneſs to God's diſpleaſure than the Phariſees were, who *truſted in themſelves that they were righteous*, were better prepared to receive the Goſpel, than the Phariſees were. Which appears by that ſaying of Chriſt to them, *Mat.* 21. 31. *Verily I ſay unto you, that the Publicans and Harlots go into the Kingdom of Heaven before you.*

Thus we ſee how the teaching of the Father by impreſſions of natural Religion

upon the mind, prepares men for a belief in Christ, and a receiving his Gospel, as they come thereby to be convinced of their guiltiness, and of their obnoxiousness to the displeasure of God thereby, and to be concerned in their own minds about their future state after Death.

2. I am now in the second place to shew how the teaching of the Father by natural Religion prepares Men for a belief of the Gospel, as they come thereby to a sensible discerning of the nature and tendency of moral righteousness and goodness. Men are taught by natural Religion, that it is a thing good in it self, and well becoming them to adore and worship God the Author of their Being, and to seek unto him in all their needs; to be just and faithful, and kind one to another. And they know and find by experience, that when they most observe to do so, they have most ease in their own minds. Their Consciences never trouble them for any thing of this nature: these things when they do them, do not make them afraid of God, as things of a contrary nature do. Such as these are things about which mens *thoughts do excuse* them, as the Apostle's phrase is, *Rom.*2.15. And men find a vast difference between excusing and accusing thoughts. These do not draw men before the Judgment-Seat of God,

God, before the Judgment Day does come, as accuſing thoughts do.

Now the ſtronger ſenſe men have of the excellent nature of moral righteouſneſs and goodneſs, and of its peaceable and comfortable effects upon the mind, the better prepared they muſt needs be to put on the Yoke of Chriſt, and to ſubmit to his government and precepts of Life; becauſe thoſe precepts of his, are almoſt, and in a manner *all* of them of *a moral nature.* The things which he enjoins his Diſciples, are generally good in themſelves, and rather to be choſen than their contrary, in caſe there were no other reward attending them, but only their ſuitableneſs to humane nature. The minds of men are better appaid and ſatisfied in doing thoſe things which Chriſt enjoins, whether they know he enjoins them or no, than they would or can be in doing the contrary. To do to all men as we would they ſhould do to us under like circumſtances, brings more ſatisfaction to the mind than the contrary. Humility brings more eaſe to the mind than Pride; and ſo does Love than Envy and Malice; and ſo does Meekneſs than Wrath and Rage; and ſo does Mercy than Cruelty; and ſo do moderate deſires to the accommodations of this Life, than thoſe which are exceſſive. And Tem-

perance and Chastity contribute more to the ease and health of the body than Intemperance; and so of the rest.

The consequence of all which is, That the more men are by powerful impressions of natural Religion upon the mind, made sensible of the excellency of moral righteousness and goodness, and of the peaceable and comfortable effects of the practice of it, the sooner and the more easily they will be induced to embrace the doctrine of our Saviour, which in reference to practice, consisteth mostly of matters of that nature.

For we must know that here the matter sticks most with men. They are well enough content to hear of Christ's having expiated Sin by the sacrifice of his death, and that forgiveness is preached in his name. But to men that are wedded to their several Lusts of Immorality, the Precepts of Christ which are quite contrary to those Lusts, are to them so many *hard sayings*, and they say within themselves, Who can hear them?

But by how much men are taught by natural Religion to discern the difference between Morality and Immorality, both in the nature and effects of them, as to the peace of the mind on the one hand, and to the disquiet thereof on the other; as to the

the honour of their nature and name on the one hand, and to the ſhame thereof on the other; as to the eaſe and health of their bodies on the one hand, and to the contrary on the other: by ſo much are they in a fit preparation of mind to receive the Laws of Chriſt, which enjoin morality with promiſe of great reward, but prohibit and condemn all immorality under the ſevereſt penalties.

The condition on which the pardon of Sin and Eternal Life were promiſed through Chriſt, conſiſts moſtly in a ſincere performance of moral duties towards God and Men: it conſiſteth of ſuch a Faith as worketh by love to God and Men; which love is an Evangelical fulfilling of the Moral Law, as we are taught, *Mat.*22. 40. *Rom.* 13. 8, 10. *Gal.* 5. 14. From which it ſtill follows, that by how much Men are improved in morality by the teaching of God, by ſo much is their belief of the doctrine of Chriſt, and the fulfilling of his great and precious promiſes facilitated.

And the reaſon hereof is, becauſe his Rules and Precepts of living, agree with thoſe ſentiments and notions of righteouſneſs and goodneſs, which are planted in the nature of Man; and therefore the conſent of their minds to them as juſt, reaſonable, and good, and fit to be obſerved,

must needs be the more easily obtained. And not only so, but by means of this congruity between the Precepts of Christ *without*, and the notions of moral righteousness *within* us, planted in the nature of Man, way is made also to gain belief of the other Doctrines of Christ, which depend wholly upon supernatural Revelation; such as are his being the Son of God, and the forgiveness of Sin, and the like. For when they find our Saviour in his doctrine pressing and inculcating upon the minds of men such precepts of moral righteousness and goodness, as they by their own natural light know to be good, and therefore from God, but never any thing to the contrary, they will be the more easily induced to believe him to be no Impostor, but one sent from God, as he affirmed he was, and consequently to believe all his other Doctrines.

Now as concerning the manner how Almighty God doth raise such a sense in men of the true nature and effects of moral righteousness and goodness, as by which they are prepared to believe the Gospel, I do not think he doth it only by assisting their faculties to act according to their natural liberty, for so he does assist them when they abuse their liberty in acting sinfully: but God does it by ingaging their minds

minds more to consider their ways than they had done before; to consider the nature and tendency of those good ways which they had refused to walk in, and the like concerning those evil ways which they had chosen. And by a frequent representation of these things to their thoughts, and by drawing their minds to look more narrowly into them, they come better to discern the nature and tendency both of the one and of the other, and so to make a better judgment of them. And by that means their former aversation from that which is good, and strong and violent inclination to that which is evil, comes to be weakned and something broken. And this prepares them to be quite overcome by the powerful motives of the Gospel, when they come to be considered, and to be turned quite about. This we see in *David* for an instance, Psal. 119. 59. *I thought on my ways, and I turned my feet unto thy testimonies.* And again, *Ezek.* 18. 28. *Because he considereth and turneth away from all his transgressions which he hath committed, he shall surely live, he shall not die.* In these Scriptures we see consideration takes place first with men before they turn, and by that means they are brought to turn: that which is consequent upon consideration of ones ways, is turning from transgression, and to God's testimonies. Now

Now God can and does when he pleaseth, pitch mens minds and thoughts upon such things as he would have seriously considered, and in some sort terminate and hold them to them. *David* knew this when he prayed thus unto God: *Keep this for ever in the imagination of the thoughts of the hearts of thy People, and prepare their heart unto thee,* 1 Chron. 29. 18.

To exemplifie this whole matter of God's preparing men for the belief of the Gospel; let it be considered how it came to pass that those few uncircumcised Proselytes from among the multitude of those of the Nations of the Gentiles, at first came to be such. How came such as the *Æthiopian Eunuch* and *Cornelius* to be such devout Persons as they and other such Proselytes are described to be, when the generality of those Nations remained still in gross Gentilism? Doubtless it came to pass by the awakening of their minds by God, to consider things more than their Neighbours did, to consider the nature and tendency of morality and immorality, and what was like to be the issue of both at last, in respect of rewards and punishments in another World. And the innate light and reason of their minds would dictate to them, that Vice could not possibly tend to their happiness, nor Vertue to their

their Infelicity in the next World. And this made them, before they were Proſelytes, ſo far as the light of Nature aſſiſted by God did lead them, to chuſe to do what was moſt likely to end in happineſs, and to avoid what was moſt likely to make them miſerable at laſt. This, no doubt, made them betake themſelves to the Worſhip of the true God only, when others of their Neighbours did not; and in this to join with the people of *Iſrael*, though not intirely in the ſame Inſtitutions of Worſhip, becauſe they were not given them in command as they were to the *Jews*. This difference between them and other of their Country-men, did firſt ſpring, as I ſay, from their taking important things more into conſideration than others did. And by this they came to be prepared to receive the Goſpel; ſo that they fell in with it readily when it was preached unto them, ſometimes at the firſt hearing. Thoſe Proſelytes we read of, *Acts* 13.48. were ſuch as were ordered and diſpoſed in their own minds towards eternal life, to wit, to look after it, and to be thoughtful about it; and as many as were ſo, did, as we there ſee, believe.

Such as theſe Proſelytes, were thoſe *other ſheep* (I doubt not) of which our Saviour ſpake, *John* 10. 16. which, as he ſaid,

said, *are not of this fold, them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice.* They were made tractable afore-hand, ready to follow the Shepherd when they should hear his voice. Such also we may well suppose the good Ground-hearers to be, who were of good and *honest hearts*, as they are described, *Luke* 8. 15. of honest minds, not willing to represent things to themselves better than they are, nor to put a cheat upon themselves and their own souls, by flattering them into a better opinion of themselves, and of their good condition God-ward than there is cause. Like him of whom the Psalmist speaks, *Who flattereth himself in his own eyes, until his iniquity be found to be hateful, Psal.* 36. 2. They are not of such partial and dishonest minds, as to be thoughtful and careful about the outward Man, and things of this present World, and to be altogether regardless and careless of their souls the better part, and of the concerns for Eternity, nor treacherously to betray them.

Thus far to shew how God hath prepared men for the belief of the Gospel, only by making principles and notions of natural Religion operative in them by a powerful impression of them upon their minds.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

How God by adding Revealed Religion to that which is Natural, prepared the Jews for the performance of the condition of the Promiſe.

IN times under the Law, and before the appearance of Chriſt in the World, Almighty God prepared the People of the Jews for the Faith in Chriſt, by adding Revealed Religiou to that which is Natural, and by making that which was Natural, more powerful and operative to ſuch an end, by that which was revealed.

After the Original Law, which is implanted in the Nature of all men, became much blurred and defaced in the minds of men, a fair Copy of it was delivered to that People by God, written in two Tables of Stone. And this was done, as for other ends, ſo for this, to wit, to awaken in them a greater ſenſe of the guilt of ſin, and their liableneſs thereby to the wrath of Almighty God, and to condemnation. *The Law worketh wrath*, ſaith St. *Paul*, *Rom.*

Rom. 4. 15. that is, it maketh the Transgressour of it the more punishable, and exposeth him the more to wrath, *For the strength of sin is the Law*, as the same Apostle saith in another place, 1 *Cor.* 15. 56. it is that which armeth those actions against a man, which would not have been punishable if there had been no Law against them. *For where there is no Law, there is no transgression*, as he saith in the former Text. And where there is no transgression, there can be no punishment due. And by parity of reason, where the Law is more obscure, and less discernable, the transgression of it must be the less punishable: and the more manifest and expres the Law is, by which men are left without all excuse of ignorance touching the evil prohibited, the greater and more criminal must the offence needs be, as when committed against a Law promulgate and fully known. This is that which stops the mouths of men against all excuse and plea of ignorance, and lays them naked and open to the penalty of the Law. *What the Law saith, it saith to them that are under the Law, that every mouth might be stopt, and all the World found guilty before God, or subject to his judgment*, *Rom.* 3. 19. And as the offence against the Law is aggravated and enhanced, by how

how much the more the Law is known to be expreſly againſt it, by ſo much may the puniſhment be expected to be increaſed by that means. *He that knew his Maſter's will, and yet did it not, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes*, above what he ſhall ſuffer, whoſe opportunity of knowing his duty hath been leſs.

Now this was the caſe with the Jews: They were under the natural Law before it was promulgated to them, as well as all other Nations. But that Law of Nature was grown ſo blurr'd and illegible through the Pravity and Degeneracy of Men, that they could hardly diſcern that to be ſin in many caſes, which was ſin by the Law of Nature. As for inſtance, *I had not known Luſt to be ſin*, ſaith S. *Paul*, *unleſs the Law had ſaid, thou ſhalt not covet*. They could hardly diſcern inward concupiſcence in this or that particular to be ſin, unleſs it brake out into open act. But now by the promulgation of the natural Law, this came to be known to be ſin, which indeed was ſo before, but not ſo certainly known to be ſo; and the like in other caſes. But when this and other things were by a promulgate Law more clearly known to be ſin, it was then at their greater peril, if they fell into them: And conſequently

they

they must needs be the more apprehensive of their danger, and their fear the greater in case they did. St. *Paul* personating a *Jew* both before and after the promulgation of the Law, saith, *I once was alive without the Law, but when the commandment came, then sin revived, and I died.* He did not know himself to be in so ill a case, as the Law, when it came, discovered him to be. And therefore he saith again, that *sin taking occasion by the commandment, deceived him, and by it slew him*, Rom. 7. By all this we may understand what S. *Paul* meant, when he said, *That the Law entered, that the offence might abound*, Rom. 5. 20. that is, that the offence in the evil nature and mischievous effects of it, might be more abundantly known, and Men made more sensible of their sad condition by reason of it: And that for this reason among others, that grace might so much the more abound in the sight of Men, when the way and means of escaping that condition should be made known to them. *Where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.* This state of theirs under the Law, was that state of the *spirit of bondage to fear*, whereof S. *Paul* speaks, *Rom.* 8. 15.

But

But then this prepared the way of the Goſpel, by making that which tended to remove thoſe fears the more acceptable. To you that *fear* my Name, ſhall the Sun of Righteouſneſs ariſe with *healing* in his wings, ſaith the Lord, ſpeaking of his ſending Chriſt among them, *Mal.* 4. 2. he came with *healing* to thoſe ſouls which had been *bruiſed* and made *ſore* before by fears and terrours that did ariſe in their minds out of that darker ſtate of the Church, wherein the way of ſalvation by Chriſt, was more obſcurely revealed.

But beſides this, by the promiſe they had of the *Meſſiah*, and by the Types and Shadows of him in the Law, and by the many Predictions of the Prophets concerning him, the Lord prepared them for the reception of him when he was come. *The Law* in theſe reſpects, was a *Schoolmaſter to bring them to Chriſt*, as the Apoſtle ſpeaks, *Gal.* 3. 24.

The many Precepts of moral righteouſneſs and goodneſs alſo wherein they were inſtructed out of the Law and the Prophets, prepared them likewiſe to receive Chriſt for the true *Meſſiah* when he was come indeed, for this reaſon, *viz.* becauſe

of that harmony and good agreement that was between our Saviour's Precepts of living, and what they had been taught before, both by natural light, and by revealed Religion superadded to it. By this former teaching of the Father, some of them became such Sheep as our Saviour said his Father had given him, *John* 10. 27, 29. It was by vertue of this preparatory teaching of the Father that they knew the Shepherd's voice when they heard it. By this they could distinguish between the voice of the true Shepherd or *Messias*, and the voice of Strangers, the voice of Hirelings. Because the Doctrine of our Saviour agreed with that way of righteousness which they had learned by the teaching of the Father, as none others did that were but pretenders. It was this that made such of them as had heard and learned of the Father, to come to Christ, to follow this Shepherd when they heard his voice, that is, to become his Disciples.

And yet more particularly, *John* the Baptist was sent by the Almighty Father, to prepare them by his Ministry for their reception of Christ, and believing in him. It was foretold by the Angel before his birth, that he should *make ready a People prepared for the Lord*, Luk. 1. 17. and by a spirit

ſpirit of Prophecy at his birth, that *he ſhould go before the face of the Lord to prepare his way*, Verſ. 76. which he did by two things eſpecially; by awakening them to repentance, and by giving them notice of the near approach and appearance of the *Meſſiah*. *He came into all the Countrey about Jordan, preaching the baptiſm of repentance for the remiſſion of ſins*, Luk. 3. 3.

The People of the *Jews* were in great part become ſuch a *generation* as *Solomon* ſpeaks of, that *were pure in their own eyes, and yet not waſhed from their filthineſs*, Prov. 30. 12. ſtrict obſervers of the Ritual part of the Law, but very immoral in their temper and in their lives: Full of a ſelf-choſen righteouſneſs, *their fear towards God, taught by the precepts of men*, to wit, the Tradition of their Elders. They were not ſenſible of the badneſs of their ſtate, their obnoxiouſneſs to the wrath of God, nor of their need of repentance in amending their lives. And under theſe circumſtances a Chriſt that ſhould come to ſave them from their ſins, was not like to be very welcom unto them, nor to anſwer their expectation who looked to be ſaved from the *Roman* Yoke by the Meſſiah. but not from their ſins.

Now that our Saviour might not lose the end of his coming amongst them, *John* the Baptist was sent before him to convince them of their bad condition, of their guilt of sin before God, and of their liableness to his wrath. That whereas thitherto the judgments upon their Nation, even the worst that had befallen them, had been but like the lopping of Branches from off the Trees that would grow again. But now the Axe was laid to the root of the Trees, to cut them quite down, never to grow again; that the utter ruine of their State, Nation, and Temple was not far off, if not prevented. And that nothing could prevent it but confession of sin, and *bringing forth fruit meet for repentance.*

Now this raised a spirit of fear in them of the wrath of Almighty God which hung over them for their sins; which made such multitudes to come to his Baptism, to confess their sins, and by his Baptism to list themselves as Penitents. And by this teaching of the Father, they were the better prepared to receive Christ when he came, especially when pointing to him, he told them, *This is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the World*, that sin of theirs which exposed them to such danger, and

and that put them in ſuch fear as aforeſaid.

And who were the Ring-leaders in oppoſing Chriſt when he was come, but the Phariſees, Lawyers, and Scribes, ſuch as rejected the counſel of God againſt themſelves, and would not be baptized of *John*? They were ſuch as were never prepared by a ſenſe of their ſin, and of the danger they were in thereby, *but truſted in themſelves that they were righteous, and deſpiſed others.* They were ſuch as thought themſelves ſo whole as to need no ſuch Soul-Phyſician as Chriſt. They did not believe as the Publicans and Harlots did, that they were in any ſuch danger by reaſon of ſin, as *John* told them they were; and that was the reaſon why they kept themſelves out of the Kingdom of God, whilſt the others entered in, as our Saviour told them, Matt. 21. 31, 32. *Verily I ſay unto you, that the Publicans and Harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you.* And he gives the reaſon of it in the next words; *For John came to you in the way of righteouſneſs, and ye believed him not; but the Publicans and the Harlots believed him.* Thoſe who did believe *John*, and were awakened with a ſenſe of their danger becauſe of ſin, they crouded, as it were, into the Kingdom of

God while that impression lasted. *From the days of John the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force,* saith our Saviour, *Mat.* 11. 12.

If enquiry be here made, that since some of the Jews in our Saviour's time, were by the Father's teaching in those several ways before mentioned, so prepared as that they followed Christ the good Shepherd when they heard his voice, and so became his Disciples. Then how came it to pass that all of them did not do the like, who had the same means of learning and of being prepared?

To satisfie us in this enquiry, it is necessary in the first place to take notice that there is a great differene between God the Father's teaching of Men, and their learning of him: He teaches all, when yet but few learn of him. Our Saviour saith, every Man that hath *heard* and *learned* of the Father, cometh unto me, *Joh.* 6 45. Not every one that hath heard him, but every Man that hath heard him so, as to learn of him, by receiving instruction from him in a way of preparation. For these are two things, and the one alas, too frequently found without the other. *Though I taught them*

them riſing up early and teaching them, yet they have not hearkned to receive inſtruction, ſaith the Lord by his Prophet, *Jer.* 32. 33. there is a Teaching without a Learning.

Now the reaſon why they did not learn when they had the ſame teaching as others had; and ſo the reaſon why it was not afterwards given to them, as it was to the Diſciples of Chriſt, to know the Myſteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, is given by our Saviour, Matt. 13. *Becauſe they ſeeing ſee not, and hearing they hear not, neither do they underſtand. This peoples heart is waxed groſs, and their ears are dull of hearing; and they have cloſed their eyes; leſt at any time they ſhould ſee with their eyes and hear with their ears, and ſhould underſtand with their heart, and ſhould be converted, and I ſhould heal them.* Which words ſignifie their refuſing, and more than a bare refuſing of that aſſiſtance which God for ſome time vouchſafed them to prepare them for that farther grace and mercy which comes by Jeſus Chriſt: They ſignifie oppoſition and ſtriving againſt their being helped and healed, their endeavouring to throw off, and to defend themſelves againſt the means uſed by God to awaken them, and to bring them to conſider things in order to their cure

and amendment of manners. *When God called they refused, when he stretched out his hands to them they regarded not, they set at nought all his counsel, and despised all his reproof, and hated knowledge*, as *Solomon* expresseth the ill carriage of such as would not in the least be prevailed with, or wrought upon by such applications as God made to them, with promise of further assistance of his Spirit and his Word if they would. *Turn ye at my reproof: Behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.* Prov. 1. 23, and following Verses.

Our Saviour by the foresaid words in *Mat.* 13. does not, I conceive, so much intend to set forth the then present ill carriage of the Unbelieving Jews in not entertaining the Gospel, as their obstinacy and untractableness under God's former Applications to them in a lower way of teaching, than that of the Gospel. For their carriage signified by those words of our Saviour, is alledged by him as the reason why it was not given to them to know the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, as it was to his Disciples. For they had opposed and withstood those lower beginnings of God with them, by which he would have prepared them for higher vouch-

vouchſafements. And accordingly our Saviour applies that ſaying to their caſe, *Whoſoever hath not, from him ſhall be taken away, even that which he hath.*

God had been repreſenting to them by his Prophets, and by the Miniſtry of *John* the Baptiſt, beſides his ſecret operations upon their minds, the danger they were in by reaſon of their immorality, notwithſtanding their outward Church-priviledges, and notwithſtanding their numerous Sacrifices, and other ceremonial obſervances. But they laboured to ſilence the clamour of their Conſciences, when God had any whit awakened them, and to lay their ſouls aſleep, and to perſuade themſelves there was no ſuch danger did attend them, ſince they were a People with whom God had entered into Covenant to be their God, that they had *Abraham* to their Father, to whom God had ſaid, I will be thy God, and the God of thy Seed. Though they were proud and covetous, unjuſt, unfaithful, cruel, envious, and malicious, *Yet they leaned upon the Lord, ſaying, Is not the Lord among us? None evil can come upon us*, as the Prophet ſpeaks, *Micah* 3. 11.

Theſe

These things considered, the reason appears plainly why all the Jews, who at first enjoyed much-what the same means, the same assistance from God to prepare them for a belief of the Gospel, yet were not prepared for it as others of them were. They refused, nay, they resisted God's first assisting Grace, whereby he would have prepared them to receive farther assistance from him. And when Men do so, and continue to do so, God after some time of striving with them, suspends that application which he formerly made to their minds to prepare them for farther assistance. After which, though they may see the Works of God, and hear his Word, and be found in the use of some external acts of Religion for fashion sake, and to do as others do, yet then they do not perceive, understand, or consider to any good effect upon themselves, the end and design of them, and so are not one jot the better for them, but rather more stupid and senseless, which the Scripture calls God's *hardening or blinding* of Men. Not that I suppose the holy and good God infuseth any malignant or obstinate quality into their minds or wills; for *God does not tempt any man to evil*, James 1. 13. but his har-

hardening of them, is either his *withholding* that *assistance* by which his Spirit did strive with them to make them better, *Gen.* 6. 3. or permitting the evil Spirit more freely to tempt them, the consequence of which is their growing worse and worse. And thus he dealt with such like untractable and obstinate Jews in Ages long before the coming of our Saviour, *Psal.* 81. 11, 12. *My People would not hearken to my voice; Israel would none of me. So I gave them up to their own hearts lusts*; not restraining them as sometime he had done. And again, *Ezek.* 24. 13. *Because I have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more*, Isa. 6. 9, 10.

CHAP.

CHAP. III.

Of the necessity of those effects on the mind, which God sometimes works by Principles of Natural Religion, to prepare all those for the performance of the condition of the promise, which do at all perform it.

After all this which hath past, you will say perhaps, What does all this discourse concern us, who live after Christ is come, or any who call themselves Christians, and which do own Christ to be the true Messiah and Saviour of the World? The Jews indeed they were prepared for their receiving of Christ against he should come, by principles of natural and revealed Religion, and some of the Gentiles by principles of natural Religion only. But how can this concern us Christians who have prevented the need of any such preparation for receiving Christ, by having received him already, as having been taught by our Parents from our Childhood

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to do ſo, when they taught us all the Articles of the Chriſtian Faith?

Yet we who live now after Chriſt is come, are as much concerned to be prepared for a ſaving reception of Chriſt, by the *ſame temper of mind*, as they were who lived before his coming. Our Saviour hath ſaid it, *That no man can come to me, except it be given unto him of my Father*, John 6. 65. And again, *No man can come to me, except the Father which hath ſent me draw him*, ver. 44. And if this be true with reſpect to all men, then of us who live in theſe days, as well as of thoſe who lived when Chriſt firſt appeared in the World. For our Saviour's words, we ſee, contain an univerſal propoſition; No man to whom it is not given of my Father; No man whom the Father which hath ſent me draweth not, can come unto me. He does no more limit his aſſertion to thoſe who did precede, than to thoſe who do ſucceed his coming.

There is no doubt but a ſenſe of our obnoxiouſneſs to the diſpleaſure of God, and the ſad effects of it in another World, upon the account of ſin, is as neceſſary now as ever it was, to prepare and diſpoſe men heartily to receive Chriſt: Becauſe

cause it is by this sense on our minds, that Christ is looked upon as the most *suitable good*, and consequently as the most desireable good, as I shewed before. It is by means of this sense when any thing strong and affecting, that Christ becomes precious unto men, as he is to every one that believes. *To you that believe he is precious*, saith S. *Peter*, 1 *Pet.* 2. 7. A true sense of the danger we are in, by having provoked the great God against us, gives great disquietness to the mind, until we come to know that that displeasure is taken off, and the danger we were in thereby removed. And it is the sense of this danger that makes Christ precious to us, when we come to understand that we cannot escape this danger but by him; and when we find that pain removed by believing in him, which the sense of danger before put us to.

And it is this sense that prepares the soul to receive Christ as Lord as well as Saviour, by that time the Gospel is well opened to men. And the reason is, because they understand thereby, that none can have the benefit of that Atonement and satisfaction made by his death, but such as are content to be governed by him in their lives, and to yield obedience to his Precepts:

Precepts: That none can be ſaved by him, that refuſe to become ſincere Diſciples to him. And they will find it no unreaſonable thing for them to obey his Precepts, and to imitate his Example, when they underſtand, that to do ſo, is in effect but to abandon thoſe ſins which created ſo much trouble in their mind before, by making them liable to, and by putting them in fear of the eternal wrath of Almighty God. The ſence of that danger their ſins had expoſed them to, and of that anxiety of mind they were brought into thereby, will prepare the mind and diſpoſe the will to receive Chriſt as Lord, and to obey him in forſaking thoſe ſins, ſo long as they are well aſſured, that then and not till then they ſhall be pardoned through his bloud, and ſo be diſcharged from thoſe fears of the wrath of God which had given them ſuch uneaſineſs of mind before.

And when they have found the difference between the eaſe of mind and peace in the Spirit which they have by their knowledge of Chriſt ſo long as they obey him; and the ſad thoughts, dark and doubtful apprehenſions, miſgivings of mind and ſtorms in the ſpirit, which ſin had wrought and raiſed in the ſoul before, it will then make them out of love with

with ſin, and afraid to have any more to do with it.

And thus you ſee according to the reaſon and nature of the thing, how uſeful and neceſſary ſuch a ſenſe is, as I have oft mentioned, to prepare and diſpoſe men to go to, or to receive Chriſt, when he is made known to them by the Goſpel, and that as well now under the Goſpel, as before; if by receiving Chriſt we underſtand ſuch a receiving as is ſaving. But otherwiſe men may, and doubtleſs do, without any ſuch ſenſe as is effectual to its end, not only profeſs belief in Chriſt, but alſo really believe in him with an inoperative, ineffectual and dead Faith.

And to the end we may yet farther ſee how neceſſary ſuch a *ſenſe* in men of their danger, as I have been ſpeaking of is, *to prepare and diſpoſe* them to come to Chriſt in good earneſt, and to believe in him with all their heart, I ſhall ſhew it you by the method which our Saviour and his Apoſtles uſed in their preaching. Both he and they inſiſted mainly, in the firſt place, in order to mens converſion, upon ſuch Doctrines as tended to beget in them *a great ſenſe of their danger by reaſon of guilt upon them.* And this they did by preaching

ing Repentance; by which, as I ſhall preſently ſhew, they laboured to beget ſuch a *ſenſe* in men.

Our Saviour began his Preaching with this, *Matth.* 4. 17. *From that time Jeſus began to preach and to ſay, Repent, for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand.* And ſo did his twelve Apoſtles, when he ſent them out by two and two: *They went out and preached that men ſhould repent*, ſaith St. *Mark* 6. 12. When the Authour to the *Hebrews*, gives a ſummary account of the firſt Principles, or beginning Doctrines of Chriſt, *Repentance* from Dead Works is not only one of them, but is the *firſt of all in order*, *Heb.* 6. 1. St. *Paul* gave this account to the Elders of the Church of *Epheſus*, both of the method and ſubſtance of his preaching publickly and from houſe to houſe, when he told them that he had teſtified both to the Jews and alſo to the Greeks, *repentance towards God, and faith towards our Lord Jeſus Chriſt:* Firſt Repentance, then Faith: Repentence for ſin, and from ſin: and then Remiſſion of it through Faith in Cheiſt.

Now in thus preaching Repentance in the *firſt place*, they laboured to poſſeſs men with a ſtrong ſenſe of *the danger they were*

in until they did repent. For that was the great Argument or motive by which they perſwaded them to it. *We knowing the terrour of the Lord, we perſwade men,* ſaith St. *Paul* 2 *Cor.* 5. 11. Thus our Saviour taught the People, that ſo long as they did not repent and reform, though it ſhould coſt them the cutting off their right hand, and plucking out their right eye to do it, *they were in danger of being caſt into Hell, where their Worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched,* Mark 9. 43. *That they were condemned already, and that the wrath of God did abide on them, ſo long as they continued in unbelief,* *John.* 3. 18, 36. When St. *Paul* preached Repentance at *Athens*, his argument to perſwade to it was, *becauſe God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the World in righteouſneſs,* *Acts* 17. 30, 31. And no greater argument can be uſed to awaken mens fears, and to haſten them out of an impenitent ſtate, than to ſet before them the terrour of that day, and the danger they are in every hour of falling under it, ſo long as they remain unreformed. The conſideration of which, while the impreſſion was upon him, made *Felix* the *Roman* Governour on the Bench *to tremble*, when *Paul* at the Bar reaſoned of righteouſneſs, temperance, and *the judgement to come,* *Acts* 24. 25.

And

And generally mens Repentance takes its *first rise* from their *fears* of falling under the wrath of Almighty God. Which doth very well accord with what was said by *David* in the *Psalms*, and twice by *Solomon* in his *Proverbs*: *The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom*, *Psal.* 111. 10. *Prov.* 1. 7. and 9. 10. The beginning of Wisdom, that is, of becoming truly wise, as men are when they become truly religious, and never till then. And this usually *begins*, as I say, in those *fears* which are raised in men, out of a sense of their obnoxiousness to the wrath and displeasure of God for sin past. And from thence indeed it proceeds to a fear of displeasing him any farther for time to come, in hope of obtaining pardon for what is past: and this is wisdom indeed (*there is forgiveness with thee that thou mayst be feared*, *Psal.* 130. 4.) But *fear* in this latter sense, hath its *rise* and beginning from fear in the former.

The Principle of Self-preservation, which is deeply rooted in every man's nature, does naturally cause a fear of God, as armed with Almighty power to destroy them that have provoked him. But in man's degenerate state, we cannot say it is so

natural to fear displeasing him, nor is attained to without some hope of pardon for what is past. Fear in the former sense goes before fear in the latter, as the needle does before the thred. It hath indeed, as godly sorrow hath, a tendency in it to work Repentance, though neither of them amount to saving repentance it self. Fear of wrath *hath torment* in it, and that prepares a man to hearken to that which will give him ease, to wit, the doctrine of pardon through Christ, and to the doctrine of Repentance as the condition of obtaining it. As rain and moisture are to the ground on which Weeds or Thorns grow, to prepare the way of tearing them up by the root, so is the fear of God's wrath to make way for the plucking up mens lusts by the root: it makes the heart more soft and tender. For by how much sin hath disquieted and perplexed the mind, with fears of the wrath of God (provided it be not to excess, as in case of despair) by so much the less grievous it will be to part with it, in hope of obtaining both ease and pardon thereby.

But here to prevent all mis-use of this Doctrine touching the necessity of a sense in each sinner of his obnoxiousness to the wrath

wrath of God, to prepare him for such a Repentance, Faith, and Obedience as is saving; let this be observed and remembred by way of caution, to wit, That no greater a sense hereof is necessary to this end, than that which issues and ends in such a Repentance, Faith, and Obedience. We must not measure the truth and sincerity of Repentance, Faith, and Obedience, by the measure or degree of the sense we have of our liableness to God's wrath, or our fears of it; but, on the contrary, the dueness or sufficiency of such a sense to prepare us, by the truth and sincerity of our Repentance, Faith, and Obedience. It is not unlikely but that *Cain* and *Judas* might have a greater sense of their obnoxiousness to the wrath and displeasure of God, than most of those, who, through a due sense of their liableness to wrath, have been prepared for a saving Repentance, Faith, and Obedience. But yet we cannot judge by that, That they had any such Repentance or Faith.

So much sense therefore of mens danger, by reason of their guilt of sin, is sufficient, be it more or less, as does prevail with them sincerely to repent of sin past, to receive Christ Jesus as Saviour, Lord, and Governour for time to come, to save

them from ſin by his death, and to be governed by his Precepts and Example for all times to come, whether peaceful and proſperous, or however adverſe or hazardous they may be. And the reaſon why ſuch a ſenſe is ſufficient, be it more or leſs, is becauſe it reacheth its end, it hath done its work for which it was raiſed by God, when once it hath thus drawn men to Chriſt to become his true Diſciples, to believe in him, and to learn of him the Chriſtian life. All means whatſoever are ſufficient in their kind, when they attain their end for which they were appointed, and ſo this of which we now ſpeak. This is a Truth ſeen by its own light.

By this the great miſtake of ſome good people appears, who have been afraid to apply Chriſt unto themſelves as a Saviour, and to lay hold of the gracious promiſes of the Goſpel, as being in doubt with themſelves, whether they had been ſufficiently humbled, broken, and prepared by legal terrours; when yet they had been zealouſly deſirous and induſtrious to approve themſelves to him in a good life. When once men are made willing to receive Chriſt as Lord and Saviour, and to walk in him as they have received him, there is no place left to queſtion whether their

their humiliation hath been ſufficient or no. For our Saviour's *invitation* of coming to him, is made to him that is *athirſt*, and his promiſe to him that does come in good earneſt, is, That he will *by no means caſt him out*. The promiſe of being received if they do come to Chriſt, is not made upon condition of being thus or thus humbled, but upon condition of their coming to him. Nor does any degree of that humiliation, which conſiſteth in fear or terrour, avail any man further than it is an occaſion of his applying himſelf to the remedy prepared by God againſt his danger.

By what hath been ſaid to ſhew what ſenſe of ones ſpiritual danger is ſufficient in its kind, and for the end for which it ſerves, it may appear alſo, That ſuch perſons as have by the advantage of a pious education, drunk in operative Principles of Godlineſs in the early days of their lives, ſo that, like *Obadiah*, they have *feared God from their youth*; or as *Timothy*, *have known the holy Scriptures from a child*, need not be in doubt of their own good eſtate God-ward, though they have not found in themſelves ſo tormenting a ſenſe of their ſpiritual danger, as ſome others have done, to prepare and diſpoſe them to re-

pent and believe the Gospel, if they can but find and feel in themselves Repentance and Faith in the true nature and genuine effects of them. No man need much to be concerned about the nature of the means, as whether it be proportionate to the end, after he once sees the end effected in himself. His sense of danger is sufficient, which causeth him to fly in due time to the place of refuge.

There needs a greater sense of danger, and more affecting fears, to make one willing to part with those sins and evil ways he hath been long accustomed to, and hath had a strong affection for, than there is to make another willing to forego those evils he never had much to do with, nor much affection for. An ordinary blast, may throw down a Plant before it hath taken rooting, when no less than a great tempest and strong blast will tear up a Tree of long standing and deep rooting.

Yet I must say, That the greater sense men have of the greatness of the danger they were in, and the more that sense hath afflicted that soul with fear and grief, by so much the more they are likely to value and prize, to love and honour that Saviour

Saviour by whom they find themſelves delivered from it. Hence it is that ſuch as have been greater ſinners than others before converſion, have many times proved more eminent Saints than others after; fuller of love to Chriſt, and zeal for him. Thus it was with *Mary Magdalen, who loved much becauſe much was forgiven her*, as our Saviour ſaid. Whereas, as he obſerves likewiſe, that he to whom *but little is forgiven, the ſame loveth but little*, Luke 27. 47.

And thus I have diſpatched the firſt of the two things I propoſed to inſiſt on, and to explain, to wit, what is done by God by way of preparation, to diſpoſe the minds of men to perform the condition of the promiſe. I ſhall now proceed to the ſecond, which is to ſhew, what is done by God to aſſiſt men in the actual performance of that condition on which pardon of ſin, and eternal life are promiſed.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

How by the very Nature of the Gospel, God does assist Men in performing the condition of the Promise.

IN shewing what God does in assisting Men in the performance of the condition of the promise of Pardon and Life, two things will come under consideration:

I. What assistance is given by God, by his very giving us the Gospel to this end; and

II. What by the influence and operation of his Spirit.

1. That Men are *assisted* by the *Gospel* in their performing the condition of the promise of pardon and life, is very evident. S. *Paul* saith, *It is the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth*, Rom. 1. 16. *That he had begotten the Christian Corin-*

Corinthians through the Goſpel, 1 Cor. 4. 15. And S. *James*, *that God of his own will begat the Chriſtians by the word of truth*, Jam. 1. 18. And S. *Peter*, *that they were born again, not of corruptible ſeed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever*, 1 Pet. 1. 23.

Suppoſing Men to be prepared by ſuch teaching of God the Father, as hath been before deſcribed, the Goſpel it ſelf is of ſuch a *nature* as makes it very apt to attract and draw ſuch Men to the belief of it, and obedience to it, when attended to, in which the performance of the condition of the promiſe doth conſiſt: And this in a double reſpect.

I. In reſpect of the ſubject matter of it, or things contained in it.

II. In reſpect of the evidence by which it is confirmed to be from God, and undoubtedly true.

1. *In reſpect of the ſubject matter of it, or things contained in it.* As for inſtance; it contains a Declaration, who, and what an one *Jeſus Chriſt* is, *viz.* the Son of God and Saviour of the World, and what he hath ſuffered to make atonement for the

ſin

sin of the World, and to obtain reconciliation between God and Men, after their rebellion against him. And the Gospel as such, cannot but facilitate its own way into the minds of such men as are burdened and pained with the sense of their own guilt, and liableness to God's displeasure. It being suited to their case, and contrived on purpose to give to such ease and relief, it cannot but render it self acceptable to them.

This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the World to save Sinners, saith S. *Paul*, 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. It is indeed a saying, a Doctrine worthy of acceptation, if any thing is so which the World ever knew, yea worthy of all acceptation to the highest degree. And its being so, makes sinners which are sensible of their very great need of a Saviour, the more ready and willing to believe it, and to hearken to any thing that tends to strengthen their belief of it. We have a saying which is found true upon common observation, That Men are willing to believe that to be true, which they would fain have to prove so, and are inquisitive after the evidence of its truth, that they may confidently believe it, and rejoyce in it. I have shewed before with

what

what joy the Goſpel was entertained at its firſt going forth into the World, by ſuch as were to any conſiderable degree made ſenſible of the danger they were in by reaſon of ſin, and therefore I do not need to enlarge upon it farther here.

Again, the Goſpel contains great and precious promiſes of pardon of ſin and eternal life, upon condition of Repentance, Faith, and new Obedience, and moſt dreadful threatnings againſt ſuch as reject thoſe terms. Now the Goſpel in theſe reſpects, is of a perſuaſive nature, and hath an aptneſs and fitneſs in it to prevail with men to uſe their endeavours of performing the condition of eſcaping the damnation of Hell, and of obtaining the glory of Heaven.

Firſt, The terrible Threatnings denounced againſt ſuch as continue unreformed in their Lives, when theſe fall into minds already diſquieted with fears for what is paſt, are very apt to alienate mens minds from ſin, and ſo to help on the performance of that part of the condition of the promiſe, which conſiſteth in Repentance or amendment of life. The ſtronger ſenſe men have of their danger by reaſon of ſin formerly committed, and alſo of

run-

running into greater danger, if they continue in ſin, after pardon is offered upon condition of amendment, the more eaſily will they be perſuaded and prevailed upon to accept of the condition of pardon, and to put forth their endeavour to perform it. The ſenſe of danger which Divine Threatnings do awake in Men when any thing ſtrong, will cauſe them to enquire how they may eſcape it, to the end they may ſpeedily fall upon the uſe of ſuch means by which ſuch an eſcape may be obtained.

Thus thoſe *pricked in their hearts*, Acts 2. *cried out, Men and Brethren, what ſhall we do?* And the Gaoler, when once in a trembling poſture, *Sirs, what ſhall I do to be ſaved?* Acts 16. 30. Theſe affectionate enquiries cauſed by a ſenſe of their danger, argued their willingneſs to do any thing they could to eſcape it; of which they gave proof by ſetting immediately, and without any delay, upon what they were directed to do to that end.

This ſenſe of danger awakened by Divine Threatnings, ſo long as it laſteth, will take off that pleaſure which men before were wont to find in ways of ſin and wickedneſs, and make the taſte of them bitter,

bitter, and by that means eſtrange their minds from them. What is it that makes Men at any time to fall out with their ſins and turn them off, but an awakened ſenſe in themſelves, by which they feel they have been betrayed by them into the ſnare of death, into ſuch danger as that the very ſenſe and fear of it, quite ſwallows up that pleaſure which they were wont to take in thoſe ſins. And under theſe circumſtances, it will be a matter of far leſs difficulty for men to perform the condition of the promiſe, ſo far as that ſtands in forſaking of ſin, than it would be to continue in it. For in this caſe they find the fear and trouble which ſtill is at the heels of ſin, is far greater than any pleaſure they can then find in it. *In vain is the Net ſpread in the ſight of any Bird*, ſaith *Solomon*, Prov. 1. 17. Even ſo, while Men have their eye upon the preſent fear and future danger ſin expoſeth them to, it diſarms the temptation to it of its power, and renders it too weak to prevail with them to run themſelves into the torments of preſent fears, and into eternal deſtruction for the future. A Dog will forbear his otherwiſe deſired morſel, while his eye is upon the Cudgel which is held over him.

Secondly,

Secondly, The promise through Christ of such inestimable benefits as the pardon of sin, and the eternal glory of Heaven are, upon condition as of Faith, so of sincere Obedience, hath a great tendency in it to reconcile our minds to our duty in particular acts of Obedience. It is inseparable from the nature of Men to desire the happiness of their own Being, in the general notion of it, and for perpetuity also. And the more desirable any object is, and the more there is in it to make our happiness great, the more powerfully are we drawn thereby to comply with the condition, and to use the means of obtaining it, when we hope it to be attainable. The greater and more attractive the object of desire is, by so much will the difficulty of the condition and means of obtaining it, seem the less. *Jacob*'s serving seven years for *Rachel*, seemed to him but a few days, for the love wherewith he loved her.

All which shews that the immense greatness of the benefits promis'd in the Gospel, does tend greatly to reconcile our minds to the condition of obtaining them, notwithstanding some present difficulties do attend it. Just as we see in other things;

things: Men would not cark and care, moil and toil as they do, nor undertake ſuch wearisom Journies and hazardous Voyages as Men commonly do, were it not that the benefit they expect to obtain thereby, does reconcile their minds to theſe difficulties. What enabled *Moſes* to forſake the Treaſures of *Egypt*, and the Honours of *Pharoah*'s Court, and to unite himſelf with an oppreſſed People, when he could not otherwiſe avoid ſin and ſerve his God as he had a mind to do? Why, it was the *eye*, the *reſpect* he had therein *unto the recompence of the reward*, Heb. 11. 25, 26. The hope of the recompence of reward, made the difficulties of God's ſervice, the reproach of Chriſt, and ſuffering with the People of God, more eligible and deſirable than the pleaſures of ſin, which were but for a ſeaſon.

Hope of benefit we ſee then is a great and powerful principle of action in Men: And if the promiſe of the great things of the Goſpel does but affect, ſtir up and quicken our hope, this will be enough to put thoſe endeavours into motion, by which the condition of obtaining them will be performed. *It is by the exceeding great and precious promiſes of the Goſpel that men are made partakers of a divine nature,*

2 Pet. 1. 4. And the reason is, because these promises do affect their hope; this hope changeth the thoughts and purposes of Men, in order to the obtaining of the things promised and hoped for; by all which they become new Men, restored to the image of God which had been lost by sin, which is the Divine Nature.

The difficult part of performing the condition of the promise of pardon and life, lies in Mens forsaking the sins to which they had been accustomed, and in practising the contrary Vertues from which they have been estranged. But the Gospel we see enables Men to do both by working upon their fears and hopes. For when two such powerful principles of action concur and conspire together to promote the same end, to produce the same effect, as they do in this, though in different respects, the operation must needs be very great, powerful, and prevalent, and the work like to go on with good success. Fear and hope are the two handles of the Soul, by which it is taken hold of and drawn.

2. Having thus shewed how apt and fit the Gospel is in respect of the subject matter of it, to draw Men to such a belief of it,

it, and obedience to it, as in which the performance of the condition of the promiſe of pardon and life doth conſiſt: I am now to ſhew in the next place its farther aptitude this way, in reſpect of that evidence it hath of its Divinity, Truth, and Infallibility.

For indeed all the power it hath to work upon Mens fears and hopes by its menaces and promiſes, to the producing of their effects in Mens Lives and Actions, depends wholly upon the ſuppoſition of its truth and certainty. Men would not be moved neither by the threatnings nor promiſes of the Goſpel, how great ſoever they be, did they believe the Goſpel to be but fabulous. And therefore the All-wiſe God hath as much concerned himſelf to give ſufficient atteſtation to the truth of the Goſpel, as he hath, to acquaint Men with the things reported in it.

To this end the Almighty Father hath by a *voice from Heaven* teſtified, that Jeſus Chriſt is his beloved Son, and that his doctrine is to be attended to, as to one whom he had ſent into the World to declare his whole mind touching Mens Salvation, *Mat.* 3. 17. and 17. 5. *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed; hear*

ye him. To the same purpose also served those numerous *Miracles* which he wrought. For these were signs to assure us that he was what he affirmed himself to be, *viz.* the Son of God, and consequently that his Doctrine is of Divine Authority. *Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his Disciples, which are not written in this Book. But these are written, that ye might believe, that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name,* John 20. 30, 31.

These Miracles in conjunction with the nature of our Saviour's Doctrine in nothing contrary to natural Religion, had certainly a very great tendency in them to beget a belief in him and of his Doctrine, or else he would never have marvelled as he did at the unbelief of those which saw them and heard him, Mark 6. 6. *He marvelled at their unbelief.* Their unbelief under such circumstances, is mentioned again as matter of wonder, John 12. 37. *But though he had done so many miracles before them, yet they believed not on him.* But this would have been no matter of marvel to our Saviour, or wonder to his Disciples, if there had not been a mighty power in those Miracles to convince Men and to perswade them to believe. To this end also served the Resurrection of Christ from

from the dead: For by that he was *mightily declared to be the Son of God*, Rom. 1. 4.

And when the Apoſtles of our Lord were after his Reſurrection ſent forth to convert the World to Chriſtianity by preaching the Goſpel to them; as a means to make it efficacious to this end, and to procure it credit and authority in the minds of Men, they were endued by the Lord with a power of working Miracles, and of ſpeaking with new Tongues, Mark 16. 20. *They went forth and preached every where, the Lord working with them, and confirming the word with ſigns following*, Heb. 2. 4. *God alſo bearing them witneſs both with ſigns and wonders, and divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghoſt, according to his own will.*

And it was in reſpect of theſe powerful Confirmations of the Goſpel, I doubt not, that S. *Paul* ſays his *preaching was in demonſtration of the ſpirit and of power*, and not with enticing or perſuaſible words of mans wiſdom, 1 *Cor.* 2. 4. It was by reaſon of this kind of demonſtration of the Goſpel to be from God, which was made by the miraculous operation of the Spirit by the Apoſtles, that the Goſpel was received as the Word of God, and not as the Word

of Man; as all those Discourses of Philosophers were, which had no other confirmation, than what the Wit and Oratory of Men could derive from principles of natural and humane Wisdom. But the Apostles Doctrine, as it was in the nature of it above humane pitch to find out, so their way of confirming of it was above all humane power and wisdom also. As their Doctrine was known only by the Holy Spirits revealing, so the Arguments, Motives, and Reasons by which they perswaded Men to believe it to be from God, were fetched from the Spirits own mighty Operations, which were visible to Men, as well those that did not, as those which did believe. *They compared and suited spiritual things with spiritual*, ver. 13. The nature of their Arguments by which they perswaded Men to believe their Doctrine, were suited to the nature of their Doctrine; both being from the Holy Spirit. The one by the Spirits Revelation to the *Apostles*, the other by the Spirits miraculous Operations *by the Apostles*. They proved their Doctrine was revealed to them by God, by the testimony which he gave, that he had sent them to preach what they did preach, by enabling them to do such things, which none could do but by virtue of a Divine power, which put forth it self in

in them. God (as was ſaid) did bear them witneſs by Signs, Wonders, and by divers Miracles which he enabled them to do and to ſhew.

And being the Goſpel was upon the account of this confirmation, received as the Word of God, and not of Man, as the Author of it; therefore it was that it did operate ſo powerfully as it did in the Hearts and Lives of them that received it, to the transforming them in their Minds and Spirits, and in the tenour of their Lives and Actions, into other manner of Men than they were before. By reaſon of which transformation, the Scripture ſtiles them New Creatures, and the Man thus altered, the New Man. *When ye received the Word of God, which ye heard of us*, ſaith S. *Paul*, *ye received it not as the word of Man, but as it is in truth, the Word of God, which effectually worketh alſo in you that believe*, 1 Theſſ. 2. 13.

The Goſpel then thus confirmed, as hath been repreſented, was and is ſo glorious an object of Faith, and ſo every way fitted and prepared to command Mens belief of it, that S. *Paul* ſuppoſeth it impoſſible but that Men ſhould believe it, unleſs the Devil hath ſtrangely blinded their minds.

And therefore he saith, 2 Cor. 4. 3, 4. *If our Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom the God of this World hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.*

And thus we see what great assistance God hath vouchsafed us for our performing the condition of the promise, by giving us his Gospel.

The Lord by his Prophet, speaking of how much he had done for his People of old, to enable them to be what he expected they should be, in order to the happiness he designed them, saith *Isai.* 5. 4. *What could have been done more to my Vineyard that I have not done in it?* That is, What in reason could they expect he should have done more to make them become obedient and fruitful, than he had done? And yet he hath done much more for us who live under the Gospel than he did for them. For he hath sent his own Son to reconcile us to himself, and himself to us by his death. He hath sent his own Son to persuade Men, which is more than all the Prophets which he sent before. And as he is greater himself, so he persuades by greater

greater Arguments than the Prophets were wont to do, both in reſpect of what hath been done for us already to oblige us, and in reſpect of what he will do, in rewarding if obedient, and in puniſhing if diſobedient. And all this lies fair before us in the Goſpel, by which life and immortality is brought to light; and which comes to us more glorioufly atteſted alſo, than the Doctrine of *Moſes* and the Prophets did to them. And therefore the Lord may much more appeal to us than he did to them, and ſay, What could have been done more to engage you to believe and obey the Goſpel, and ſo to perform the condition of the promiſe, which I have not done? And if ſo, *How then ſhall we eſcape, if we neglect ſo great ſalvation, which at the firſt began to be ſpoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him?* And yet behold he hath done and does more for us in another reſpect under the Goſpel, than he did in times paſt for his own peculiar People. For according to the various Predictions of the Prophets of old, we under the Goſpel have a more plentiful effuſion of the Spirit to enable us to perform the condition of the promiſe of pardon and Life, than ever they ordinarily had. Which brings me to the ſecond thing I propoſed to inſiſt on, which is, to

ſhew

shew what assistance Men receive in performing the condition of the promise by the influence and operation of the Spirit of God.

CHAP. V.

How, by the Holy Spirit's operation upon the Mind and Will, men are assisted in performing the Condition of the Promise.

BUT before I proceed to shew this, to prevent mis-understanding in this matter, I must premise thus much by way of caution, to wit, That when I propose the influence and operation of the Holy Spirit, to be considered as an *aid* distinct from that which is vouchsafed by the Gospel it self, I would not be understood thereby to deny that assistance, which we receive by the Gospel it self, in performing the Condition of the Promise, to be the *aid and assistance of the Spirit*, at least, in some respect. I only suppose, That there is an influence and operation of the Holy Spirit upon the hearts of men, by which

which they are enabled to perform the Condition of the Promiſe, *over and above* what the Goſpel, in its own nature, abſtractedly conſidered, does contribute thereunto. Otherwiſe, as I have been now ſhewing, the operations of the Goſpel it ſelf is of, and from the Holy Spirit, both in reſpect of its revelation and confirmation. So that what is ſaid and done by the Goſpel, is, in a ſenſe, ſaid and done by the Holy Spirit. And they are led by the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit, that make the Goſpel their Guide.

All Scripture is given by inſpiration of God, 2 Tim. 3. 16. *and holy men of God ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt.* 2 *Pet.* 1. 21. And the things ſpoken by the Prophets in the Old Teſtament, are ſaid in the New to be ſpoken by the Holy Ghoſt, *Acts* 1. 16. and 28. 25. *Heb.* 3. 7. and 10. 15. And it's ſeven times ſaid in *Revel. c.* 2. and 3. *He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the Churches*; meaning what he ſaid to them in and by thoſe Epiſtles which St. *John* ſent to the ſeven Churches in *Aſia*. And God is ſaid to have *teſtified againſt the People of the Jews by his Spirit in his Prophets*, *Neh.* 9. 30. And St. *Stephen* ſaid to thoſe in his time for oppoſing the Goſpel; *Ye*

do

do always resist the Holy Ghost, as your Fathers did, so do ye. And St. *Paul* said touching such as should despise their Doctrine and Commands, *He that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who also hath given unto us his Holy Spirit*, 1 *Thess.* 4. 8. By all this it appears, That what is done by the Doctrine of men divinely inspired, is done by the Spirit of God; and what is done against it, or against them for the sake of it, is done against the Spirit of God. *He that heareth you heareth me; and he that despiseth you, despiseth me*; saith our Saviour also, *Luke* 10. 16.

But yet though the *assistance* men receive by the Gospel in performing the Condition of the Promise, be the assistance of the Holy Spirit, yet it is *not all the assistance* they receive from the Holy Spirit therein. For when the Holy Scripture speaks of *the Gospels coming unto men, not in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost*, 1 *Thess.* 1. 5. of their being *born of the Spirit*, John. 1. 13. and 3. 5. *of the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost*, Tit. 3. 5. *of their obeying the truth through the Spirit*, 1 Pet. 1. 22. *of a being built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit*, Ephes. 2. 22. *of the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, and of God's*

God's working in them to will and to do of his good pleaſure, Phil. 2. 13. and the like, there is no reaſon to reſtrain the ſenſe of ſuch ſayings, unto the *alone* operation of the Doctrine of the Goſpel, as having God, or the Spirit of God for its Author, and no more. The Prayers which our Saviour made and taught his Diſciples to make for the ſucceſs of the Goſpel, and which the Apoſtles made and taught the Chriſtians to make for the like; do all of them imply likewiſe ſomething more to be done by God, for the renewing of men unto himſelf, than only by his bare ſending his Goſpel among them.

Although men can conſider matters diſcovered by the Goſpel when they hear them, as well as they can any other things ſet forth by Diſcourſes of another nature; (and indeed God expects they ſhould do ſo, at the peril of their own deſtruction, if they do not) yet ſuch is the zeal of the Lord to promote and ſet forward the buſineſs of our Salvation, that he is *not willing to truſt the work only in our hands*, though he hath brought it to our hands by ſuch preparations wherein he hath prevented all endeavours of ours. *He doth not only bring the Goſpel and our minds together, and then leave them to operate upon each*

each other in the strength of their own nature only; but is graciously pleased to accompany his word more or less, as he sees good, with a secret operation of his Spirit upon our minds, both to incline and *dispose* the internal Faculties to exercise and imploy themselves about matters of this high nature, and likewise to *assist them in it.*

There is doubtless a secret power and efficacy of the Divine Spirit goes along with the Gospel into the mind and will, by means whereof the Gospel does the more readily and effectually work upon the mind and will, to the renewing of them. When the Disciples, scattered by occasion of the Persecution by *Saul*, preached the Gospel to the *Grecians*, it is said, *The hand of the Lord was with them, and that a great number believed and turned to the Lord*, *Acts* 11. 21. Their believing and turning to the Lord, was the effect of the Lord's hand being with them in preaching, as well as it was the effect of what was preached. *The Gospel is the power of God to salvation to every one that believeth*, Rom. 1. 16. Believing and Salvation are the effects of God's power going along with the Gospel, as well as of the Gospel it self. By that the Gospel becomes

comes more quick and powerful, and ſharper than a two-edged ſword. *It is the ſword of the ſpirit*, as it is called, as well in reſpect of its being managed by the Spirit, as it is by being provided by the Spirit for Chriſtians to manage. The whole ſucceſs of the Goſpel in producing thoſe happy effects in Men, by which they become other manner of Men than they were before, is aſcribed unto the Grace and Bleſſing of God that goes along with the Goſpel. *I have planted, and Apollos watered, but God gave the increaſe*, ſaith S. *Paul. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increaſe*, 1 Cor. 3. 6, 7. Upon this account all that appearance of the Vertues of Chriſt which is in true Chriſtians, by which they give ſome good account unto the World what an one Chriſt is, and what manner of thing his Goſpel is, is aſcribed unto the operation of his holy Spirit upon their hearts, in that metaphorical way, uſed by S. *Paul* when he told the Chriſtians at *Corinth*, *That they were the Epiſtle of Chriſt written by the Spirit of the living God, upon the fleſhly Tables of their hearts*, 2 Cor. 3. 3.

Thus much in general, to ſhew that there is an aſſiſtance by the operation of God's

God's Spirit vouchsafed unto Men in performing the condition of the promise, *over and besides* what assistance they receive therein from the nature of the Gospel. I shall now proceed to shew a little more particularly how Men are assisted by the operation and influence of the Holy Spirit in performing the condition of the promise of pardon and life. Not to undertake to describe all those ways by which God communicates his *aids* unto Men in performing the condition of the promise, but only so much of those Divine Methods as may give some light in the thing, and some satisfaction to our minds touching this great affair of our Souls.

1. One of the first things is a procuring from Men, or God's working in them *a fixedness of thoughts* upon the things which concern their Salvation or Damnation, a keeping their minds upon them. Before this is done, Men may have many *fluctuating* thoughts about God and Christ, Heaven and Hell, and about the way of escaping the one, and of obtaining the other, and yet be little or nothing the better for them. For these being things out of sight, and remote from the senses, there are a multitude of other thoughts which throng into the mind, from external objects that lie

lie open to the ſenſes, which ſcatter and divide, yea, and which in a great meaſure exclude and thruſt out of the mind, thoſe other more neceſſary thoughts. The thoughts and cares about the *Farm*, the *Merchandize*, the *Oxen*, and the *Marrying of a Wife*, ſpoken of in the Parable; yea, and worſe than theſe, about unlawful pleaſures and undue ſeeking of Honours; theſe ſo entertain and take up Mens minds, that thoughts of God and another World, and the great concerns of Religion, which have not the advantage of making their way into the mind by the ſenſes, have little or no room there. Hence comes the ſin of forgetting God, ſo much ſpoken of in Scripture, which carries in it a forgetting our accountableneſs to him, and conſequently a forgetfulneſs of all thoſe things which depend upon our minding of theſe.

Now while thoughts of this nature rule and bear ſway in the mind, and other thoughts are only now and then floating there without any ſetled abode, theſe latter can have no powerful influence to alter the ſtanding temper of the mind, or to change the motions and operations of the will, which yet are neceſſary to the performing of the condition of the Promiſe.

And therefore one of the first things, as I say, which God does in assisting Men in the performance of the condition of the promise, is to stay and fix their thoughts upon the things which concern their Salvation. Though their thoughts are and must be exercised about the things of this present life; yet their thoughts about their Souls and another World, are so fixed by God in their minds, when thus assisted by him, that they are continually intermingling themselves with their other thoughts, and correcting their extravagancy, and exercising a power over them. Here now they dwell; though they must give some place to other necessary thoughts, yet so as that they are never long absent, but still return into the mind. Thus the good Ground hearers, which bring forth fruit with patience, are said to be such as having heard the Word, *keep it*, (Luke 8.15.) that is, they keep it on their minds, so as that it is not stolen out of their hearts by the evil one, by filling the mind with other things, as it befals the High-way-side hearers: Nor choaked, or stifled in its operation by an over-powering multitude of other thoughts about things grateful to the flesh, as about Riches and Pleasures, and Lusts of other things, as it is in the Thorny

ground hearers. Not as if where God thus fixeth the thoughts upon their principal objects, that there he gives memories to retain all they hear, that is not meant by their *keeping* the word, but that such keep upon their minds the scope and substance of those points of the Christian Religion as are necessary to their Salvation, as the fruit of all their Hearing. It is the *ingrafted Word which is able to save the soul*, James 1. 21. that is, as it is ingrafted upon the mind by setled thoughts and fixed consideration, without which Men may hear all the days of their life, and yet be but as the *silly women* S. *Paul* speaks of, *laden with sins, and led away with divers lusts*, who were *always learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth*, 2 Tim. 3. 6, 7. The Lord made *David* wise through his Word, but it was by keeping it and his mind together. Thou, saith he, through thy Commandments, hast made me wiser than mine Enemies; *for they are ever with me.* I have more understanding than all my Teachers: *For thy testimonies are my meditation*, Psal. 119. 98, 99. Thus when the Lord assisted *Lydia* in the business of her believing, *he opened her heart so that she attended to the things which were spoken by Paul. She held her self to them*; so the *Dutch* Translators renders it: She kept

her mind staid upon them by serious consideration. And this we see was the effect of God's operation upon her mind; he opened her heart so that she attended, *Acts* 16. 14. It is God that thus *puts his Law into mens minds*, that pitcheth and terminateth their thoughts upon the things contained in it, according to the tenour of the New Covenant, *Heb.* 8. 10. This is one thing wherein the Divine Assistance doth consist.

2. Another thing is, the Holy Spirit's operation upon the mind, enabling it by the light of the Gospel, to *discern the nature, tendency, and usefulness of the things discovered and revealed by the Gospel.* By Man's Apostasie from God, and customary sinning, the mind is darkened, the eye of the understanding corrupted, and thereby to a great degree rendred impotent, and unable to discern things discovered by the Gospel to be what they are, though set before it. Like the Man in the Gospel, who while imperfectly cured of his blindness, saw Men walking as Trees: They have and can have in that state but confused and indistinct notions of spiritual things: *If the eye be evil, the whole body is full of darkness.* This being Man's case, there is need of a Divine Power to work some cure

cure upon the Eye of the mind to diſcern aright concerning the things of the Goſpel. *David* had ſome ſenſe of this upon his mind when he prayed thus unto God: *Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold the wondrous things of thy Law*, Pſal. 119. 18. The Diſciples had not right notions of things revealed by the Scriptures concerning Chriſt, until our *Saviour opened their underſtandings to underſtand the Scriptures*, Luke 24. 45. When the Veil is taken away, ſo that Men *with open face behold the glorious things of the Lord in the Goſpel, it is by the Spirit of the Lord*, 2 Cor. 3. 18. Though *the hope of the Chriſtian's calling, and the riches of the glory of God's inheritance in the Saints* are revealed in the Goſpel, yet S. *Paul* knew for all that, that there was need of *having the eyes of the underſtanding inlightned, to know and diſcern what thoſe are*; and therefore prayed unto the God and Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt for it, in the behalf of the *Epheſians*, c. 1. 17, 18. And if theſe Chriſtians after they believed, ſtood in need to have the eyes of their underſtanding further enlightned by God, in order to a more clear and full proſpect of the glorioufneſs of the Hope ſet before them, for the ſtrengthening and encouraging them to perſevere and hold out in their obedience to the Go-

spel, then doubtless they much more stood in need of some enlightning by God in this kind to enable them at first to begin to be sincerely obedient.

In the dark Men are apt to mistake one thing for another; so before this illumination of the mind by the Spirit of God, they are apt to call evil good, and good evil; to put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter; to chuse evil under the notion of good, and to refuse good under the notion of evil. But when the light of the Law and Gospel are let into the mind, by which every thing is discovered and discerned in its true shape and colour, then Sin and Vertue appear to be what they are in their own nature, sin to be sin indeed, and vertue and goodness to be vertue and goodness indeed. Then sin appears in the turpitude, deformity and malignity of its nature, and in its tendency to the ruine of the subject in which it dwells: And righteousness, vertue, and goodness appear in their beauty and usefulness, and in their tendency to the happiness of such in whom they dwell. For instance; Before this illumination, Men are apt to mistake the Doctrine of the Grace of God which brings Salvation, and to think they shall be saved because Christ died for sinners, and because they

they believe he did ſo; eſpecially if they be but now and then troubled in their minds, and ſorry for their ſins, and do pray God to pardon them, though they ſtill continue in them. But when the eyes of their underſtanding are opened to ſee things as they are, and are repreſented in the Goſpel; then they perceive none ſhall be ſaved by the Death of Chriſt, whatever their belief may be, but ſuch as ſhall be perſuaded by the great motives of the Goſpel, to be reconciled to God by being reconciled to their Duty, throwing down the Weapons of their Rebellion, and becoming univerſally ſincerely obedient to his government, according to the Laws of Jeſus Chriſt.

This illumination of the mind by God, contributes ſo much towards Mens performing the condition of the promiſe, that the whole of their converſion is ſometimes meant in Scripture, when but this only is mentioned, *Heb.* 10. 32.

3. Another part of the Divine Aſſiſtance afforded unto Men in performing the condition of the promiſe, is the Holy *Spirit's operation upon the will* to aſſiſt it in what is proper to it in performing of the condition of the promiſe. For whatever

sense there is begot in Men of the danger they are in by reason of sin: Or whatever illumination is wrought in the mind touching the way and method laid down by God of escaping that danger; yet until the will be changed and wrought to a firm resolution of complying with the terms on which the promise of pardon and life through Christ is made, the work is not done, the person is not regenerate, nor in a regular capacity of enjoying what is conditionally obtained by Christ, and conditionally promised through him. Men are not begotten of God, nor born of God, as the Scripture speaks of some that are; they are not begotten by the word of truth, nor born again of the immortal seed of the Word, until the change be made in the will as well as in the understanding: And when ever it is made, it is the effect of a divine operation. *It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure*, Phil. 2. 13.

Now in that assistance which is vouchsafed unto Men in renewing them in their wills, in *working in them to will*, several things are to be considered.

1. The Holy Spirit disposeth the Will to be *passive*, in reference to those notices given

given by the enlightned mind and underſtanding touching thoſe things which have been diſcovered to it, by the Goſpel through the illuminating operation of the Spirit upon it. The Will having been accuſtomed to buſie and exerciſe it ſelf about other objects, ſuch as the ſenſes have preſented to it, things that concern only this preſent World and Life, it will hardly ſuffer any paſſage for Heavenly and Divine things which are ſtrangers to it, without ſome Divine Operation of the Spirit to incline the will thereto, or to open a paſſage for them. Which is done (I conceive) by ſuſpending the evil influence which the will had upon the underſtanding, in keeping or with-holding it from conſidering with any ſerioufneſs and frequency, the things that concerns the Soul and another life. And if the underſtanding be but at liberty ſeriouſly and frequently to conſider ſuch things as well as thoſe that concern only this preſent life, the will then cannot but ſee and taſte them to be better, becauſe the mind and judgment in ſuch caſe, cannot but repreſent them to the will as much better, and as things wherein the happineſs of our nature is much more concerned, than in any, than in all the things of this World.

God

God in taking off the will from the foresaid bad influence it had upon the considerative faculty, *takes away the heart of stone* the Scripture speaks of. For the heart of stone which God said he would take away, signifies the inflexible temper of the will, and the resistance it makes against the understandings taking those things into serious consideration which tend to persuade the will to alter its purposes, and to alter its choice of objects.

Mens not considering things that concern their Souls and another Life, when yet they can and do consider things that relate to the Animal Life, is justly imputed to the faultiness of their wills; they do not consider them, because they will not, not because they cannot; it is because they have no propension of will to engage their considerative faculties about those things. *They turn back from God*, and why? But because *they will not consider any of his ways*, John 34. 27. So that until God do take off this strong Bias which is upon Men's will, they will not consider those things, which if they did seriously consider, would certainly change the bent and motion of their wills.

Now

Now how Almighty God does take off this ſtrong influence which the will hath upon the mind to keep it from conſidering things of greateſt importance, I have ſhewed, at leaſt, in great part in Chap. 1. of this Diſcourſe; to wit, by raiſing in the mind ſuch *ſenſe* of guilt and danger in reference to the Soul, as does counterpoiſe the prejudices which proceed from the will againſt ſuch conſideration. For when the will cannot give eaſe to the mind by putting it upon the conſideration of any thing elſe than thoſe which concern the Soul and a future ſtate, then in reference to the Man's own relief, it becomes content that the mind ſhould ſeek its eaſe, by conſiderations of another nature than what it had been before accuſtomed to. And thus the will becomes at the leaſt paſſive as to thoſe conſiderations and notices which proceed from an awakened and enlightned mind.

2. By the wills being made thus paſſive, it comes, together, with the underſtanding, to taſte and feel the goodneſs and ſweetneſs of thoſe things whereof the great motives of the Goſpel are made, the uſefulneſs of them to make a Man happy, beyond any thing it ever taſted before. *The ear trieth words, as the mouth taſteth meat,*

meat, as *Elihu* speaks, *Job* 34. 3. The outward sense of the body being put for the internal sense of the mind touching those things that come into it by the ear. The mind by considering what a Man hears, tasteth whether it be good or bad, as he doth his Meat by his Palate. Thus the superlative goodness of the great things of the Gospel come to be tasted both by the understanding and the will, by a diligent and due consideration of them, which is the minds chewing them. We read of Men's *tasting the heavenly gift*, their *tasting the good word of God, and of the powers of the world to come*, Heb. 6. 4, 5. of the *tasting that the Lord is gracious*, 1 Pet. 2. 3. of holy *David*'s saying, that God's Word was *sweeter to his taste than honey to his mouth*; and of *Job*'s saying how he *esteemed it more than his necessary food*; and of the Prophet *Jeremiah*'s *eating of it*, and of his finding it thereupon *the joy, and the rejoycing of his heart*. However these, or some of these Sayings may be meant of a higher degree of this taste, than Men meet with upon the first change that is made upon their mind and will, yet doubtless, something of this spiritual relish is found upon the mind and will of every true Convert, upon his first effectual turning, and does contribute to the forming of those good reso-

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lutions which are taken hereupon; which brings me to the next thing:

3. The will, by having received ſome taſte of the ſuperlative goodneſs of the great and precious promiſes of the Goſpel, touching pardon of ſin, and eternal life, comes thereby to be reconciled to the terms or condition on which thoſe great benefits are promiſed, and to take up a reſolution of endeavouring to perform thoſe terms, or that condition. Though it be a great thing for a man to reſolve upon ſuch a thing as to turn his back upon his formerly beloved vanities, and to betake himſelf to the ſtudy and practice of other kind of things, from which he hath been willingly and wilfully eſtranged, yet the ſenſe of the danger of refuſing to do ſo, and the hope of the greatneſs of the benefits he ſhall receive if he does, prevails with the will to reſolve upon it, againſt all that which would draw it another way, God alſo *ſtrengthening him* thereunto, *with might by his Spirit in the inner man.* And this he does, at leaſt in great part, by making the great motives of the Goſpel preſent to his mind, and by keeping them under his conſideration, and drawing his thoughts frequently upon them.

4. That

4. That which is yet more difficult, and wherein the Divine Aſſiſtance is greatly needful, is to *do* as well as to will, and *to put in execution* thoſe good purpoſes when they have been raiſed and formed in the will. *To will is preſent with me, but how to perform that which is good, I find not*, Rom. 7. 18. *The Spirit indeed is willing, but the Fleſh is weak*, Matth. 26. 41. Such ſayings as theſe ſhew it to be a harder matter to do indeed, than it is to purpoſe to do.

There are many good purpoſes in men which ſtick in the birth, prove abortive, and never come into act for want of ſtrength in the will [in which they were conceived] to bring them forth. Few are ſo bad, but that at ſome times, and in ſome good mood they reſolve to amend and become better, when the Spirit of God is at work on their minds and conſciences to awaken them: but theſe purpoſes wear off and die within moſt men, and never come to effect for want of ſtrength and firmneſs. Many would be better that yet remain bad, if they could be ſo with wiſhing and deſiring, without reſolving to put themſelves to the trouble of croſſing their own corrupt humour, and

and of denying the unreaſonable cravings of the fleſh. And thoſe that do reſolve upon thoſe labours and endeavours which are neceſſary to a thorow converſion of Soul, yet many times find a great ſtrife within themſelves, between the taking up of ſuch reſolutions, and the putting them in execution; they meet with great and ſtrong ſollicitations from the fleſh, from the ſenſitive appetites, to let fall ſuch reſolutions, and great diſcouragements ſet before them alſo to hedge up the way with thorns. *The Fleſh luſteth againſt the Spirit*, and the Devil aſſiſteth the Fleſh all he can with his ſuggeſtions: ſo that it becomes a matter of great difficulty, for mens purpoſes and reſolutions in this kind, to hold out, and to make their way thorow all this oppoſition. And when ever this difficulty is overcome, and mens reſolutions become ſo ſtrong as to carry them through all this oppoſition, it is to be attributed to God, it is becauſe God *worketh* in them to *will and to do* of his good pleaſure, *Phil.* 2. 13.

The Spirit of God then we ſee worketh in men to do, by working in them ſtrength of reſolution in willing to do, thereby drawing that out into actual performance which had been reſolved on.

But

But I do not say, That the Spirit of God doth enable such mens performance to answer their resolutions to the height presently, and at the first. That which the Spirit of God does enable men at first to do in this case, is, honestly, really, and sincerely to set upon the work resolved on; that is, sincerely to endeavour to reform, amend, and to become new men; to strive against all known sin, and to endeavour to do all known duty as well as they can; but the victory is got but by degrees.

There is a great difference between a man's getting the victory over those oppositions of Flesh, World, and Devil, which withstood him in his beginning, when he was setting upon the work of amendment of life, and his destroying those enemies of his Soul, so as that they shall no more annoy him, or endanger his falling short of the happiness he seeks: (which to be sure they will, notwithstanding his first victory, unless he pursue that victory, by seeking the utter ruine and destruction of them, by keeping up a continual war against them.) The former victory, I reckon, is perfectly obtained, when men are not prevailed upon by any opposition whatsoever, but that they will, and do seriously,

ſeriouſly, and ſincerely, and actually engage in a conſcientious obſervation of the ſeveral duties of Chriſtianity, enjoyned by our Saviour, both in abſtaining from evil, and in doing good.

But the latter victory is obtained but by degrees, as the new Man grows ſtronger and ſtronger, and the old Man weaker and weaker, like the houſe of *Saul* and *David*. A Man, I conceive, does commence ſincere Chriſtian, and real Diſciple of Chriſt, when he has obtained the firſt victory; but cannot approve himſelf to God, and his own conſcience to be, and to continue ſuch, farther than he follows his enterprize, and purſues that victory, by endeavouring the *deſtruction of the whole body of ſin*, and by aſpiring after a *ſtanding compleat in all the will of God.*

When our Saviour ſaid (*Luke* 12. 47.) *That ſervant which knew his Lord's will, and prepared not himſelf, neither did according to his will, ſhall be beaten with many ſtripes:* we ſee the leaſt that will ſecure a man from this threatning of our Lord, is a man's preparing himſelf to do according to his Lord's will. And if by preparing himſelf be meant a putting himſelf in the the beſt poſture he can to do it, by

using the best means and helps he can, in order to it, and then doing it as well as he can, though not so well as he would; then it seems very probable, That for a man to prepare himself to do his Lord's will, will not only secure him from being beaten as a disobedient servant, but also render him acceptable to his Lord in such his preparation to please him.

And I think the Apostle's rule will hold in reference to this, though mentioned but upon a particular occasion; that of Alms-giving, 2 *Cor.* 8. 12. *If there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.* So long as a man's doing his Lord's Will as well as his Alms, does but answer his ability and capacity, and proceeds from a *willing mind*, a mind inclined and bent to do better, as he to give a better Alms if he could; this Man's endeavour and service will be no more rejected because it is so mean, than the poor Widow's two Mites were, but be accepted, because it holds some proportion with his Ability, and proceeds from a mind and will, that would have put the Man upon doing more, if he could have done it. And this indeed is, in a favourable sense, a Man's serving his Lord and Master

ſter *with all his might*, with all that little ſtrength which he hath.

And yet, in this, Almighty God does not, I conceive, weigh Men in reference to their performance or endeavours to perform, by grains and ſcruples. For *he knows whereof we are made, and how we are but duſt*, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſpeaks. He conſiders the compoſition of our Nature, Fleſh as well as Spirit, and the conſtitution and complexion thereof, and how the motions and activity of the Spirit are limited and ſtraitned by the body to which it is united. He conſiders all the diſadvantages we are under from without us, as of times and places where the Providence of God hath caſt us, and of Education, Company, and Acquaintance, and the like; he conſiders all a Man's circumſtances, and then, according to the Goodneſs and Benignity of his Nature, makes allowances in eſtimating a Man according to his endeavours and performances. He is not extream in marking what is done amiſs. *He pities us as a Father pities his children, and ſpares us as a man ſpares his own ſon that ſerves him*, if the Biaſs of our will and conſtant endeavours do but ſtand right towards him, and if our endeavours do but hold ſome good proportion to that

aſſiſtance we receive from him, An inſtance of all which we have in the Character which the Scripture gives of *David*, when it ſaith, *He turned not aſide from any thing commanded by God, all his days, except in the matter of Uriah*, 1 Kings 15. 5.

Theſe things I note by the way, to the end we might be the better able to make ſome judgement, not only of what aſſiſtance Men receive from God, when he worketh in them both to will and to do, but alſo *what that willing and doing is*, which we may hope will, through Grace, be accepted for a performance of that Condition, to which the promiſe of Pardon and Life is made.

And thus we have ſeen, in ſome meaſure, how Almighty God, by the aſſiſtance of his Grace, brings about that change both in the mind and manners of Men, by which the Condition of his Promiſe of Pardon and Life is performed. He awakens Mens fears, by making them ſenſible of their danger by reaſon of ſin. And theſe *fears*, eſpecially when they grow any thing ſtrong, *prevail* againſt thoſe *prejudices*, which make men unwilling to conſider the concernments of their Souls, and

and things relating to another Life. And by conſidering, Men come, through God's further aſſiſtance, to have new apprehenſions of things, to ſee, and to judge of things as they are, and then to chuſe or refuſe them according to that Judgement.

God does not give Men new faculties of underſtanding and will: he only aſſiſts thoſe faculties to throw off that burden which oppreſſed them, to break thoſe fetters by which they were bound, and ſo to reſtore them by degrees to their native liberty of acting regularly. Hence the Scripture calls this work of God upon the Soul, a being *renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him*, Col. 3. 10. that is, to a right judgment of things, wherein the Soul of man reſembled its Maker. It is termed *a being renewed in the Spirit of the mind*, Epheſ. 4. 23. *a being transformed by the renewing of the mind*, Rom. 12. 2. *and the renewing of the Holy Ghoſt*, Tit. 3. 5.

That which is moſt connatural to the will in Man, is to chuſe his happineſs. It is not in Man's power to chuſe to be miſerable under that notion, but whenever he does ſo, it's under the notion of good.

And this is the corruption that cleaves to Man in his degenerate state, To chuse that which is evil under the notion of good; and likewise to chuse an inferiour good with a greater degree of *volition* than a good that is superiour. As when a temporal good, and the good of the Body, is chosen with a greater strength, and power of willing, than an eternal good, and the good of the Soul.

Now that which God does in regenerating Man, is the vouchsafing him such *assistance*, as by which his *mind is restored* to a power and liberty of making *right judgment* of things, to judge that to be good which is so, and that to be evil which is so. And then to make a right judgment between an inferiour and a superiour good, which the Apostle calls a *proving or trying things that differ, and the approving of things that are excellent*, Phil. 1. 9. That which he does therein in reference to the *will*, is to enable it in its election and rejection of things to *be governed* by the rectified *judgment of the mind*, to be no longer imposed upon by the irregularity of the sensitive appetites unto which it had been in bondage, while they usurped the Throne, the place and office of the understanding and judgement

ment in giving laws to the will, what it ſhould chuſe, and what it ſhould refuſe. For ſo far as the will is renewed, it chuſes and refuſes, according to the laws and dictates of an enlightned mind and rectified judgment, and no longer by the blind appetites and propenſions of ſenſe. When ever an inferiour and ſuperiour good come in competition, the will, ſo far as renewed, will ſtill chuſe that which is ſuperiour. And when two evils come in competition, a greater and a leſs, the evil of ſinning, and the evil of ſuffering, the will, as renewed, chuſes the leſs.

But in all this change made in the mind and will, there is *no unnatural force* put upon the faculties; but, on the contrary, they are thereby *relieved* againſt an unnatural force which had been put upon them. They had, by an unnatural force, been turned aſide from acting regularly to the making of wrong judgment of things, and wrong elections of them. It was an unnatural force which put the ſenſual appetites and paſſions into the place of governing the will in her reſolutions and elections. And God's work in transforming and renewing the Soul, is but his relieving and freeing it from theſe tyrannical impoſitions, and reſtoring the faculties

in their several operations to their pristine liberty and order: the mind, to judge of things as they are; and the will, to submit her self in her resolutions and elections, to the government of the judgment now rectified: and the appetites and passions, to conform themselves to the elections and resolutions of the will, under the conduct of such a rectified judgement. And when things are thus right in the Soul, which is the fountain and spring of external actions, the life and conversation cannot, in the main, and in the general course of it, but be regular also.

The doing of all this, the working so great a change in the Soul, will, indeed, require, not only the operation of God's Word, but the operation of the Hand of his Power also, to bring every thing into its right place, and each faculty to do its own work. For the faculties of the Soul, Mind, and Will, are enfeebled by sin, which is the sickness of the Soul, as Mens limbs are by sickness of the Body; so that they cannot do that which otherwise would be natural, easie, and pleasant to them, until God himself is pleased to convey strength into them, to *strengthen men with strength in their souls*, as the *Psalmist* speaks. Yet

Yet it must be confessed, That God does not, to effect this cure, give this strength in so miraculous a manner, as strength and *perfect soundness* was given to the Cripple, *Acts* 3. which was done in an instant, but in a more leisurely and gradual way; the seed which he sows in the Soul, comes to perfection by degrees, *first the blade, then the ear, after that, the full corn in the ear*, Mark 4. the work of thorow-conversion is not begun and finished all in an instant ordinarily, but is usually carried on in such a slow and regular process, as if it were wholly contrived and wrought by the power of our own reason, as a late judicious Authour well expresseth it.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

Of God's aſſiſting thoſe that periſh, towards their performing the condition of the promiſe of Salvation: And of their refuſing to make uſe of that aſſiſtance; and of their periſhing for that reaſon. Of God's not hindering men from refuſing his aſſiſtance, and of the reaſon why.

IT is of no ſmall concernment to ſatisfie our minds in this, to wit, that it is not for want of mercy and goodneſs in God towards thoſe that periſh, that yet they do periſh. And if we conſider how that God does aſſiſt even thoſe that periſh, towards their performing the condition on which Salvation is promiſed, until that aſſiſtance is rejected, and that their periſhing proceeds from their refuſing to uſe that aſſiſtance, and the reaſon why God does not hinder them by the irreſiſtibleneſs of his grace from refuſing that aſſiſtance, it will go far toward ſuch a ſatisfaction.

1. I ſhall begin with the firſt of theſe, and ſhew that God does aſſiſt thoſe that periſh, towards their performing the condition on which Salvation is promiſed. This I ſuppoſe will appear more than probable when theſe things following ſhall be conſidered.

1. The holy Scriptures acquaint us, that *God would have all men to be ſaved and come to the knowledge of the Truth*, 1 Tim. 2. 4. *That he is not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance*, 2 Pet. 3. 9. Now ſince neither of theſe can be attained without God's aſſiſtance, how can it be ſaid that he would have *all men* to come to repentance, if he did not afford them his aſſiſtance towards it? How can his willingneſs on this behalf be known or diſcerned, if he ſhould with-hold that aſſiſtance from any of them, without which that cannot be done, which yet he ſays he would have done?

2. The ſame mercy and grace which inclined God the Father to give his Son, and the Son to give himſelf a Ranſom *for all*, cannot as we may well conceive, but incline him to afford unto *all* his *preparatory aſſiſtance* towards performing that conditi-

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on, without which his giving of Christ for all, would be ineffectual to their Salvation. His giving his Son for all, which is the greater gift, infers his willingness to vouchsafe to all the less also, so long as his end in giving the greater will be lost, unless he give the lesser also.

3. If God did not begin to assist even those that perish, to perform the condition of the promise, until that assistance has been refused and opposed, I would fain know how they can be left *without excuse* when they come to be condemned for not repenting, unless we could suppose them able of themselves to repent without Divine Assistance, which yet the Scriptures will not suffer us to suppose. For if they could as well plead that Divine Assistance had *never* been afforded them, but *always with-held* from them, as they may plead the *impossibility* of their performing the condition of the promise without Divine Assistance, it would be an excuse, why they did not repent and believe, and a great one too.

4. How can it be said, which yet is usually and generally affirmed, that under the New Covenant, Salvation is granted to all Men that do not wilfully refuse it, if assistance

assistance to perform the condition, were not afforded unto all, as well as the promise of it is on that condition; until they wilfully refuse to make use of that assistance? For Men can no more perform the condition on which Salvation is promised, without Divine Assistance, than they can be saved without performing that condition: And consequently Salvation cannot be said to be offered to all, unless Divine Assistance be afforded to all likewise.

5. It is no wise probable that God should require and expect repentance from *all* Men, which yet he does, *Acts* 17. 30. or that he should account them culpable if they do not repent, if he did not afford unto *all*, such means and assistance as by which they may be able to repent. No wise or good Man will require such work to be done by his Servants, without furnishing them with such Tools, without which it cannot be done: Much less will God require repentance from all Men, unless he had vouchsafed such assistance unto all, as by which repentance might be no impossible thing to them.

6. It is no wise likely that since Christ died for all, but that it was that all might have

have the benefit of his death upon one condition or other: Nor is it any whit more probable that God should promise this benefit upon an *impossible condition*. For Men to promise any thing to Men upon impossible conditions, is but *trifling*, and who dare fasten any thing like it on God? And yet for God to promise the benefit of Christ's Death unto all, upon condition of repentance, would be to promise it upon an impossible condition, unless he did afford unto all his assistance towards it.

7. In the Days of the Old World, the Spirit of God by the preaching of *Noah*, by his long-suffering, and by his Operations on Men's minds, did *strive* with the then whole World to bring them to repentance, and even with the *spirits* which afterward were *in prison for their disobedience*, Gen. 6. 3. compared with 1 *Pet.* 3. 19, 20. which *striving* with them by the *Spirit of God*, was his *assisting* of them towards their repentance. And if God did afford his assistance unto all before the Floud to bring them to repentance, it is no wise likely but that he hath done, and does so to all likewise after the Floud.

8. Our Saviour in his Discourse wherein he shewed that no Man *could come* to him,

him, except he were *prepared* by the Father, ſaid, *It is written in the Prophets, and they ſhall be all taught of God*, John 6. 45. And it no ways follows that all are not taught of God, becauſe all do not learn, as is ſhewed in another place. Many are taught when but few learn, as many are called when but few are choſen. And if all are taught of God, then all have a preparatory aſſiſtance from him.

9. We cannot reaſonably think but that God who is the lover of Souls, is more ready to apply himſelf to the minds of all Men, to diſpoſe them to what tends to their Salvation, till by their often oppoſition they provoke him to leave them as incurable, than the Devil the Evil Spirit is to diſpoſe them to what tends to their deſtruction; and yet this evil Spirit which works in the Children of Diſobedience, is as we have reaſon to believe, buſie with the minds of all Men for their hurt.

10. When it is ſaid by St. *Stephen* concerning the diſobedient Jews, *Ye have always reſiſted the Holy Ghoſt, as your Fathers did, ſo do ye*, Acts 7. 51. it is evident that the Holy Ghoſt had been attempting and making many Eſſays upon their minds, as bad as they were, in order to the reclaim-

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ing them; otherwise the Holy Ghost could not be said to have been resisted by them. The Holy Ghost doubtless did often suggest to them that the way in which they walked, was *evil in the nature of it, and destructive in its tendency*, such as was altogether unsafe for them, and tending to their ruine. For so much is signified in reference to their Fathers, by that in *Nehem.* 9. 30. *Many years didst thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by the Spirit in thy Prophets. Thou testifiedst against them, that thou mightest bring them again unto thy Law*, as it is in *Verse* 29. and so escape the misery they were otherwise bringing upon themselves. And this the Spirit of God did out of *compassion* to them; *He sent to them by his Messengers, rising up betimes and sending; because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place*, 2 Chron. 36. 15.

11. *The goodness and long-suffering of God*, which he exerciseth towards the worst of Men, carries in it *the nature of Divine Assistance* towards their repenting. *It leads to repentance*, according to that of S. *Paul*, *Rom.* 2. 4. And God's leading Men to repentance, is certainly his assisting them towards it. By his long-suffering he gives them opportunity to bethink themselves, and

and upon ſecond thoughts to repent; and not only ſo, but by it he invites them to repent: For that is the Language of God's forbearance, if Men would but conſider that they might underſtand it.

For, for what other end can Men think that God forbears to cut them off after they have once deſerved it? Surely, it is not that they might ſin the more, and that ſo their puniſhment might be the greater; I believe hardly any wicked Men can think ſo. And if not for that, for what elſe can they think it to be, but that they might have time to repent? But whether they apprehend it and conſider it or no, it is ſo, he ſpares them for that very reaſon. *He is long-ſuffering to us-ward, not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance*, 2 Pet. 3. 9. And is it likely that God who ſpares them that they may repent, will deny them his grace, without which he knows they cannot? To what purpoſe ſhould he ſpare them to repent, when he knows they cannot, if he were reſolved not to enable them to it?

And as the forbearance, ſo the *goodneſs* of God *leadeth to repentance*. For when ſinners obnoxious to God, are not only ſpared by him, but alſo made partakers of the

effects of his goodness and kindness (according to that of our Saviour, *he is kind to the unthankful and to the evil*, Luke 6. 35.) they must needs conclude, if they consider it, that he does not delight in their misery as such, though they have deserved evil and not good at his hands, but that by his kindness he would gain upon them and draw them to better thoughts of him, and to a better behaviour towards him. *He left not himself without witness (viz.* of his seeking *to draw all Nations from walking in their own ways) in that he did good, and gave them rain from Heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with food and gladness*, Acts 14. 17.

If any conclude from God's forbearance and goodness to wicked Men, that he is not displeased with their evil ways, no more than they themselves are; like those, Psal. 50. 20. *These things thou hast done, and I kept silence*, saith God, *thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thy self:* I say, if any can persuade themselves thus to conclude, it must be only profligate wretches, sinners of no ordinary rank. For very Heathens, and such as the Apostle brands with a very black Character, thought otherwise. *Their thoughts did not only accuse them, but they knew the judg-*

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ment of God, as he ſays, *that they which commit ſuch things are worthy of death*; and therefore ſought to appeaſe God by their Sacrifices. And this is evidence enough, that ſuch as they, as bad as they were, did not think God was not diſpleaſed with their evil ways, or that he did forbear them upon that account.

Now this long-ſuffering and this goodneſs of God, is a piece of Divine Aſſiſtance toward repentance, which God vouchſafeth even to the Heathen and barbarous Nations. And however this aſſiſtance may be much *inferiour* to what is vouchſafed them who have the *Oracles of God* among them; yet this, with the ſecret operation of God, by impreſſing principles of natural Religion upon the minds of ſuch, have, as I have ſhewed, ſo far prevailed upon many of them, as that they have been thereby prepared to receive and believe the Goſpel, as ſoon as it hath been ſufficiently revealed and made known to them: And ſo far alſo as in the mean time to become *morally religious* in Devotion towards God, and in Juſtice and Charity towards Men.

This ſeems very evident in thoſe uncircumciſed Gentiles, which are ſtiled *Religi-*

ous Proſelytes, Acts 13. 43. *men fearing God*, ver. 16. 26. *devout men*, Acts 10. 7. as Dr. *Hammond* hath obſerved in his Notes upon *Acts* 10. 2. Of which ſort were *Cornelius* and the *Eunuch*. And when the Lord ſaid to S. *Paul*, in a Viſion at *Corinth*, *I have much people in this City*, as a reaſon why he would have him continue preaching there, notwithſtanding the Jews in that place oppoſed themſelves and blaſphemed, *Acts* 18. 10. I queſtion not but he meant it of ſuch Gentiles as were in the firſt degree morally religiouſly diſpoſed, and ſo were prepared to receive the Faith of the Goſpel, as other ſuch ſo prepared had done before them. And of ſuch as theſe, only further improved in morality, I ſuppoſe S. *Paul* ſpeaks, *Rom.* 2. 26. when he ſaith, *If the uncircumciſion keep the righteouſneſs of the law, ſhall not his uncircumciſion be counted for circumciſion?* And in reference to ſuch it was that S. *Peter* alſo ſaid, *I perceive of a truth that God is no reſpecter of perſons, but in every Nation he that feareth God and worketh righteouſneſs, is accepted with him*, Acts 10. 34, 35.

Theſe ſeveral conſiderations tend, you ſee, to evince, that God does not deny his preparatory aſſiſtance to any of thoſe that periſh: And that therefore their periſhing

riſhing is not for want of ſo much mercy in God towards them, as by which their periſhing might have been prevented, had they not refuſed and oppoſed the mercy of God it ſelf towards them, in that way and method of ſaving, in which he ſaves others that are ſaved. *God hath concluded all under belief, that he might have mercy upon all*, Rom. 11. 32. And thoſe who will not be ſaved by the mercy of God in that *way and method* of his mercy in which he ſaves thoſe that are ſaved; nor unleſs they can be ſaved by God's mercy in a way of their *own chuſing*, in oppoſition to God's, muſt ſit down with their own choice, and go without that Salvation which they might have had if they would, and which God of his Compaſſion, did more than barely offer them, while his Spirit did ſtrive with them, as it did with them of the Old World. Theſe are they that *receive the grace of God in vain*, againſt whoſe folly S. *Paul* does with great ſeriouſneſs and earneſtneſs beſeech and admoniſh Men, 2 *Cor.* 6. 1. And truly they are Men of a ſtrange preſumption, that can promiſe themſelves that which God never promiſed them; as if God ſhould for their ſakes, alter his ordinary Method of his Mercy in ſaving Men, to ſave them, when he hath many and many times re-

remptorily declared the contrary in the Scriptures of truth. They doubtleſs that can do thus, are the Men the Scripture ſpeaks of, *that deſpiſe their own ſouls*, that ſet little by them, and concern themſelves little about them.

By the reaſons given to induce a perſuaſion that God affords his preparatory aſſiſtance unto all, I do not ſay, nor mean, that he does vouchſafe it to all equally and alike. For the ſcope of our Saviour's Parable, I conceive, doth intimate the contrary, when he ſaid, *To one is delivered one talent, to another two, and to another five*, Mat. 25. But then if he which hath but the leaſt, doth but uſe that for the end for which he received it, he ſeems by parity of reaſon to be capable of being dealt with as a faithful Servant in oppoſition to him who is doomed as ſlothful, though he does not do ſo much as he does who hath received more. He that gained but two Talents by uſing the two which he had received, was pronounced a faithful Servant, and dealt with as ſuch, as well as he who gained five with uſing the five which were delivered him. So that we ſee a Man's faithfulneſs and unfaithfulneſs is eſtimated by his uſing or not uſing what is afforded him, for the end for which it is vouchſa-

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fed him. If he that hath but one Talent, gain though it be but one, with uſing that one he hath received, he, we may ſuppoſe, will be dealt with as a faithful Servant, as well as he that gains two with two, or five with five. If a Man's Repentance, Faith, and uſefulneſs in the World, do but hold ſome good proportion to the meaſure and degree of aſſiſtance he hath from God in means and helps external and internal, though both the one and the other be but of the leſſer ſize, yet we cannot deny ſuch to be capable of better uſage from God, than ſuch as are, and will be ſentenced for Impenitent, Unfaithful, and Unprofitable. We cannot ſay that ſo little will make a Man which hath more means and helps, capable of the reward of a faithful Servant, as will another which hath not ſo much. For *to whom much is given, much will be required*; *and to whom men commit much, of him they ask the more*, ſaith our Saviour, *Luke* 12. 48. That probably will not be ſufficient to ſave a Man who enjoys the Goſpel, which may be ſufficient to ſave ſuch a one as *Cornelius* was before the Goſpel was made known to him. *God is a God of knowledge and judgment, by him actions are weighed*, and all circumſtances of a Man's caſe conſidered. And doubtleſs, God makes larger allowances in eſtimating the

goodness of a Man's performances that hath less assistance, than he doth in estimating his for good that hath more.

This I have here noted the rather, to the end we who have the Gospel, may have the more charitable opinion concerning the state and condition of some of them which have it not: And likewise to put them in mind who *enjoy more means*, and therein more assistance from God than others, how absolutely necessary it is for them to *do more than others*, to the obtaining from God, the approbation of good and faithful servants, and such as have performed the condition of the promise.

2. Having now made out the first of the things proposed, *viz.* That God doth assist even those that perish, towards their performing the condition on which pardon and life are promised, until that assistance is rejected; I proceed now to the second. Which is to shew that the *reason* why Men are deprived of the pardon and Salvation purchased by our Saviour, is *founded in* their *refusing to make use of God's assisting grace*, through which otherwise they might have been enabled to have performed the condition, on which pardon and life are promised.

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Whatever means God uſeth, tending to awaken, direct, or perſuade Men to repent, reform, and amend, are his *aids* and *aſſiſtances* vouchſafed them to that end. And ſuch are his Reproofs, Inſtructions, Commands, Counſels, Threatnings, and Promiſes, when *applied by his Spirit unto the minds of men.*

Now then, Mens *refuſing* to hearken to, and to conſider theſe things, or to comply with them, and their endeavouring not to be affected with them, or moved by them, is their *refuſing to be aſſiſted by God* to perform the condition of the promiſe.

And upon this very thing is both the wickedneſs of Men and their deſtruction charged in Scripture, and that under a great variety of expreſſion. Sometimes it is termed, a *not enclining the ear to hear*, a *not hearkening*, a *refuſing to hear*, a *refuſing to return*, a *ſtopping the ears that they might not hear*, a *cloſing the eyes that they may not ſee*, a *rejecting of the word of the Lord, and of the counſel of God againſt themſelves.*

Theſe things which are ſpoken of the outward ſenſes, do ſignifie and repreſent the poſture of bad Mens minds, when they refuſe

refuſe to ſet *their hearts* to what God ſays or does to them. *They ſeeing ſee not, and hearing they hear not*, as our Saviour expreſſeth it, *Mat.* 13. 13. as Men are ſaid to do, when their minds are not at all buſied or concerned with the things they hear or ſee. And when it is ſo with them, they are no more moved or affected with the things they ſee or hear, than as if they had not ſeen nor heard them at all.

And when the Scripture ſaith, that they *ſtop their ears, that they may not hear*, this ſignifies ſomewhat more, to wit, the *arming* themſelves againſt what is ſaid, ſo that the things ſpoken may not enter their Souls, nor at all affect them, and is much what the ſame thing, which the Scripture means by Mens hardening themſelves, and ſtiffening their necks. Theſe are ſo far from endeavouring to comply with God's applications to them, for the altering their way and courſe of Life, that they are afraid of being affected with, or converted by any thing that may be ſpoken, or done to them. *Their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have cloſed, leſt at any time they ſhould ſee with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and ſhould underſtand with their hearts, and ſhould be converted, and I ſhould heal them*, ſaith our Lord concerning them, *Matth.* 13. 15. It

It is true indeed, *No man can come to the Son, except it be given him of the Father, and except the Father draw him*, John 6. 44, 65. But then the *reaſon* why Men are not drawn ſo, as to be *prepared* to come to the Son, ſo ſoon as he is ſufficiently revealed to them, is becauſe they *refuſe* to be ſo. The wiſdom of God ſpeaks after this manner. *I have called and ye refuſed, I have ſtretched out my hand and no man regarded, they would none of my counſel, they deſpiſed all my reproof; the turning away of the ſimple ſhall ſlay them*, Prov. 1. 24. God, we ſee, calls and ſtretcheth out his hands to ſinners; he reproves, he counſels and perſwades; *and this is his drawing.* But many of thoſe whom he thus draws, they we ſee refuſe, they regard not, they deſpiſe, they turn away: and this is their *refuſing and rejecting God's aſſiſtance*, it is their refuſing to be drawn; and it is this their refuſing and turning away that *ſlays them. See that ye refuſe not him that ſpeaketh: for if they eſcaped not who refuſed him that ſpake on earth, much more ſhall not we eſcape, if we turn away from him that ſpeaketh from heaven*, Heb. 12. 25. *How oft would I have gathered you, and ye would not?* ſaith our Saviour, *Mat.* 23. 37. And again, *Ye will not come to me that ye might have life*, John 5. 40.

3. We

3. We may perceive by all this, That God's method of drawing Men, is not to work upon them in an *irresistible* manner; for if it were, there would be no place left to draw back or to refuse: which yet, by the Scriptures, and experimental Observation, we see there is.

But this will further appear, when we consider, That the same preparatory Grace and Assistance from God, which will dispose some to Repentance, proves ineffectual to others, which could not be, if Repentance were wrought in an irresistible manner and way. Our Saviour hath told us, for instance, That if *Tyre and Sidon* had but had the same means of Repentance vouchsafed unto them, which *Corazin* and *Bethsaida* had, they would have repented, when yet *Corazin* and *Bethsaida* did not. Matth. 11. 21. *Wo unto thee, Corazin, wo unto thee, Bethsaida: for if the mighty works which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.* Nay, a less degree and proportion of means will work Repentance in some, when a greater will not in others. Which is an evident proof, That Repentance may be wrought by a less proportion of

of means than that which is irreſiſtible; otherwiſe that which is irreſiſtible in its operation, may be reſiſted, which is a Contradiction in terms. The Men of *Nineveh* repented at the preaching of *Jonas*, when the obſtinate Jews did not repent, though they had more powerful means vouchſafed them, to bring them to it, than the Men of *Nineveh* had, to wit, the preaching and many mighty miracles of our Saviour; which was the reaſon, why our Saviour ſaid, the Men of *Nineveh* ſhould riſe in judgment againſt them, and condemn them, Matt. 12.41. *The men of Nineveh ſhall riſe in judgment with this generation, and ſhall condemn it, becauſe they repented at the preaching of Jonas, and behold a greater than Jonas is here.* That which is or may be made ineffectual to its end, is not irreſiſtible in its operation: but the means of Repentance vouchſafed the unbelieving Jews, was made ineffectual by them, as to their Repentance, though more and greater than the Men of *Nineveh* had, by which Repentance was wrought in them. By which it is manifeſt, That the Repentance of the *Ninevites* was not wrought by an irreſiſtible operation; becauſe the means uſed to bring the unbelieving Jews to Repentance, was greater than that the *Ninevites* had, and yet was reſiſted.

Though

Though I do not say, or think, That God doth always give the same degree of assistance to all persons in like cases, (he doth what he will with his own) it is enough he gives sufficient to all; yet the *reason of the different event* of the *same* means of Grace vouchsafed to those that do not repent, and to those that do, ordinarily so far as we can judge, lies in the *greater degree of untractableness* and unteachableness which is found in the one, than is found in the other; by means whereof the same applications and assistances from God, are rendered ineffectual to the one, which are not so to the other. But if the method and manner of God's operation, in working Repentance and Faith, were irresistible, no degree of obstinancy in men, could withstand it, or render it ineffectual.

There is an Opinion, indeed, much different from this, and which hath obtained even among many good and worthy Men, which does suppose the reason of the different event of God's applications to Men, to lie in the different manner of his applying himself to them. As when we are invited by it to conceive, That the reason why some repent, and others do not, is because God works it *irresistibly* in the one,

one, when he refuſes to do ſo in the other. The ill conſequents of which opinion we may well ſuppoſe they were no whit aware of who were the firſt promoters of it, and were far enough from owning them, though they held faſt the Opinion which does infer them. But yet if the things neceſſarily conſequent upon this Opinion, prove it to be bad, it can be no breach of any rule of Charity or Modeſty to mention them, upon ſo fair an occaſion as this now before us, but rather the contrary if I ſhould not, and may conſiſt well enough with that veneration I have for the memory of many of thoſe who have embraced it.

This Opinion renders the Damnation of ſuch as periſh, impoſſible for them ever to have eſcaped after they had once ſinned. For if nothing leſs than God's *irreſiſtible* operation be ſufficient to bring ſinners to Repentance, then would it have been impoſſible for any that periſh to have prevented it, becauſe no ſuch means of Repentance was ever vouchſafed them; for if it had, they could not but have repented as well as any. This Opinion therefore tends to leſſen the Grace and Mercy of God, in that proviſion which he hath made for the Redemption of the World,

World, as if it were not ſufficient for the Salvation of any, but ſuch as are, and ſhall be actually and eventually ſaved. It implies and ſuppoſes, that the reaſon why ſuch as periſh are not ſaved by the Death of Chriſt as well as others, is for want of ſo much compaſſion in God towards them, as to aſſiſt them to perform the Condition, on which ſuch Salvation is purchaſed and promiſed. Whereas Almighty God hath not only given his Son to be a propitiation for the ſin of the whole World, but hath alſo afforded ſuch aſſiſtance unto all, as by which they might have come to perform that Condition upon which the Promiſe of Salvation is made, as I have before endeavoured to ſhew. It does not conſiſt with the plain and obvious ſenſe of ſuch Scriptures as tell us, That *God is not willing that any ſhould periſh, but that all ſhould come to repentance.* For how can we conceive any ſuch willingneſs in God, concerning thoſe who yet do periſh, if he ſhould wholly have refuſed them that aſſiſtance, without which it was impoſſible they ſhould repent, and eſcape periſhing?

An Opinion it ſeems to be, if it were true, which would render all God's applications to thoſe that periſh, to have prevent-

prevented their periſhing, uſeleſs and inſignificant. For to what end ſhould other means be uſed to bring thoſe to Repentance, who, in the iſſue, do not repent, if no other means be ſufficient to effect it in them, but ſuch an irreſiſtible operation of God, as he never intended them? And how ill a repreſentation would it make of God, if he, according to the tenour of this Opinion, ſhould at laſt condemn Men for not repenting, and for not believing and obeying the Goſpel, when it was impoſſible they ſhould, ſo long as God refuſed to work theſe Graces irreſiſtibly in them.

And truly if thoſe that periſh had ſo much to plead in *excuſe* for themſelves, why they did not repent under all the mighty motives they had to *perſwade* them to it, and other means to *aſſiſt* them in it, it would abate, or rather quite take away a great part of the torments of the damned, which do ariſe from a ſenſe of their groſs, wilful, and obſtinate neglect to hearken to thoſe powerful motives they once had to perſwade them to repent, and to make uſe of thoſe helps and means they once had to aſſiſt them in it. If they could but plead the impoſſibility of their repenting upon the account of God's not

vouchſafing them the irreſiſtible operations of his Grace and Spirit, which was granted to all others that eſcape periſhing, it would, in a great meaſure at leaſt, abate the tormenting gnawing of the worm that never dieth. For then it would leave no place for thoſe gripes of Conſcience, fierce ſelf-accuſations, and intolerable ſelf-reflections, which proceed from the remembrance and conſideration of the loſs of the opportunity they once had given them from God, of eſcaping the miſery they have brought upon themſelves, wherewith they are perpetually racked. For if they could believe that all they could have done here in this life towards the eſcaping of that miſerable ſtate, would have availed them nothing, but that it depended wholly upon the irreſiſtible operation of God upon them, which was altogether out of their power, they might perhaps turn their rage againſt Almighty God, for not affording them the ſame means of eſcaping, as he had done others that were ſinners as well as themſelves; but would hardly reflect upon themſelves for not doing that which was impoſſible for them to have done. This ill conſequence alone, of the Opinion under conſideration, if there were no other, were enough, one would think, to detect

the

the crookedneſs and deformity of it, which yet, as I have ſaid, hath obtained ſo long as it hath done, among many good Men as well as others. And indeed ſhould this Opinion generally obtain among bad Men, it would, in all probability, be a dangerous temptation upon them, to neglect doing what they might do to *flee from the wrath to come*, and to expect, That if God intends to ſave them, that, one time or other, he ſhould come with ſuch power upon them to convert them, as that they ſhould not be able to withſtand it.

4. But if this ſhould run in the mind of any, That God could, if he would, hinder Men from refuſing his Aſſiſtance, and prevent the periſhing of any, by working Repentance in all by the irreſiſtible operations of his Grace: I ſhall anſwer ſuch a thought thus, That it is poſſible for God to do, what-ever it is poſſible for him to will ſhould be done. God's Power hath no other bounds ſet to it, but his own Will. *What-ever the Lord pleaſed, that did he in heaven and in earth, in the ſeas, and in all deep places*, Pſal. 135. 6. But then is is impoſſible for him to will any thing, or to do any thing which is not perfectly agreeable to his

own infinite Wisdom, by which he *regulates his will and all the exertions of his power.* For *he worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will*, Ephes. 1. 11. Not according to the prerogative or absoluteness of his will simply considered, but according to his will regulated, and governed by infinite Wisdom and Counsel. *The King's strength loveth judgment*, saith the *Psalmist*, speaking of God, *Psal.* 99. 4.

So that we may truly say, that God can no more do that which doth not agree with his Wisdom, than he can that which doth not agree with his Truth, or with his Righteousness. As it is impossible for God to lie, so it is impossible for him to do any thing that does not become his Wisdom.

Why could not God have done more for his Vineyard than he had done? *Isaiah* 5. 4. It was not doubtless because he had already acted therein to the utmost extent of his power simply and absolutely considered, but because he had done as much, all things considered, as became a Wise God to do toward such a People to make them good, as there he means by his Vineyard.

S. *Mark*

S. *Mark*, ch. 6. 5. ſpeaking of our Saviour, ſaith, *that he could do no mighty work there*, to wit, in his own Country, *ſave that he laid his hands upon a few ſick folk, and healed them.* But why could he not do as mighty works, and as many of them in his own Country as he did in other places? Doubtleſs it was not for want of power, but conſidering the ill temper of the people there, and the vehement prejudice they had againſt him, he did not think it fit for him, meet or convenient to do ſo many, and ſo mighty works there, as he did elſewhere. S. *Matthew* ſaith, *he did not many mighty works there, becauſe of their unbelief*, chap. 13. 58. Lo here we ſee the wiſdom of our Saviour reſtraining the acting of his power in things tending to work faith and repentance in Men.

Every one knows that it is matter of *wiſdom* in a Governour to try Men by committing to them leſſer truſts at firſt. And if they quit themſelves well under thoſe, then to commit greater truſts to them, and ſo to prefer them by degrees. But if they miſcarry under thoſe leſſer truſts, they do not only forbear committing to them greater, but alſo withdraw from them thoſe leſſer truſts which had been

committed to them. And this they do upon that rational principle mentioned by our Saviour, Luke 16. 10. *He that is faithful in that which is leaſt, will be faithfull alſo in much; and he which is unfaithful in the leaſt, will be unfaithful in much.*

And according to this rule of wiſdom, God himſelf proceeds ordinarily, in vouchſafing his aſſiſtances unto Men, in order to their performing the condition of the promiſe, as our Saviour hath told us, *Mat.* 13. 12. and repeated the ſame, *chap.* 25. 29. in that ſaying; *To every one that hath ſhall be given, and he ſhall have abundance; and from him that hath not, ſhall be taken away even that which he hath.* God begins with Men by awakening their natural principles of Religion, in cauſing thoughts to ariſe in their minds about their future ſtate, and what may become of their Souls when this Life is over, and about the tendency of good and evil ways. And when this operation of God upon their minds is not ſlighted but attended to, and thoughts of this nature revolved in their minds, ſo that they do but *incline* to amend their Lives, and to take ſome care of their Souls, then God comes in with more and further aſſiſtance, and ſo on, if that be attended to alſo, until he hath wrought thoſe firſt *incli-*

clinations into reſolutions, and then thoſe reſolutions into actual endeavours, till at laſt he brings them up to a performance of the condition of the promiſe.

But if Men make no uſe of theſe leſſer beginnings of God with them in thoſe preparatory aſſiſtances, to the ends aforeſaid, but neglect and ſlight them, and at laſt oppoſe them, and harden themſelves againſt them, ſo that they grow worſe rather than better under them; then Almighty God, after he hath thus ſtriven with them as long as he thinks fit, at laſt leaves them to themſelves, by withdrawing thoſe aſſiſtances which he had before afforded them; and ſo *takes away from them that which they had*, becauſe they did not make any uſe of it to the end for which it was given them.

Now this method of God's proceeding with Men, is repreſented in Scripture as a thing which is *meet* and *worthy*; that is, which *becomes* the Wiſdom and Righteouſneſs of God as Governour of the World. Thus for inſtance in the loweſt kind; when God had begun with the Gentiles to operate upon their minds by principles of natural Religion, and to work in them ſo much knowledge and ſenſe of himſelf by his works and otherwiſe, as to leave them

without excuse, and yet *they did not retain God in acknowledgment, nor glorifie him as God, nor were thankful* for his undeserved favours; made no good use of these lower beginnings of God with them; then *God gave them up to a reprobate mind, and to vile affections*, took off and withdrew that restraint which his beginning assistances put upon them. And this dealing of God with them, S. *Paul* calls a *recompence* which was *meet*, such as was fit and becoming the Wisdom, the Righteousness and Goodness of God the Governour of the World, and such as was unexceptionable upon all accounts whatsoever, *Rom.* 1. 27.

Those in the Parable of our Saviour who were invited to the Wedding-Feast, and yet would not come, but slighted it, though they were told what preparations were made for their entertainment, are said to be *unworthy*, *Matt.* 22. 8. There would have been no *decorum* or comliness in forcing the Wedding-Feast upon such, whether they would or no. The invitation signifies God's application to the minds of Men, to draw them to do that by which they might become partakers of the blessings by Christ held forth in the Gospel. Their obstinate refusing to do which, is that which makes them *unworthy* of those bene-

benefits, and of God's *further applications* to them to make them capable of them. Thus the contumacious Jews, when they put the Goſpel away from them, when it brought a tender of Salvation to them, they thereby judged themſelves *unworthy* of everlaſting life, and *unworthy* alſo of God's further applications to them: For thereupon the Apoſtles left them, *Acts* 13.46.

It is remarkable that our bleſſed Saviour himſelf gives thanks unto his Father for *hiding* thoſe things from the wiſe and prudent, which he *revealed* unto Babes: which is an argument of the Wiſdom and Comlineſs of God's proceeding thus with Men, in denying them the *after-aſſiſtances* of his grace, that have hardened themſelves againſt *his firſt*: And our Saviour's words imply ſo much when he ſays, *Even ſo Father, for ſo it ſeemed good in thy ſight*, Mat. 11. 25, 26.

But beſides theſe Teſtimonies from Scripture, the nature and reaſon of the thing ſhews it to be ſeemly and a becoming thing in God, and agreeable to the higheſt wiſdom, for him as Governour of the World, not irreſiſtibly to work grace in thoſe that oppoſe it to the uttermoſt in all other applications which God makes to them. It becomes

becomes the Wisdom of God to govern his Creatures according to the frame and constitution of those natures he hath given them. Man then being made an intelligent and free Agent, endued with reason and judgment, and liberty of will to chuse or refuse according to the Dictates of his mind and judgment, it must needs be most congruous and becoming the Wisdom of God, in governing this kind of Creature, to give him such Laws as by which he might know what is fit for him to chuse and what to refuse. And God having given him such a nature, and such Laws as are suitable to it, it is most congruous to leave him to the freedom of his own choice, and finally to determine him to the end of the way he makes choice of, whether it be Life or Death. And it is so more especially when Death is not awarded unto any, until they have first slighted and withstood those Applications which God hath made to them to warn them of their danger, and to take them off from proceeding in such ways as inevitably tend to their destruction. Now when God hath many and many a time over-done thus with Men, and yet they will take no warning, nor be perswaded to concern themselves for their Souls, what can be done to give such Men grace, and to save them? Unless God should depart from

from his own rules of government, and the terms he hath fixed of giving and withholding grace, of rewarding and punishing Men. And this in wisdom he cannot do, since they were established by himself in wisdom and counsel at the first.

When our Saviour hath said it as the Law of Heaven, and the Will of the Almighty, *That from him that hath not shall be taken away that which he hath*, meaning that which he had, but did not use; how can such Men as have had assistance from God afforded them, but have made no use of it, ever hope that God should give them grace and save them? Unless they could promise themselves that he is so fond of them, as for their sakes to wave his own established Laws and Rules, and to do it for them in a way of prerogative above his own Law? A thing which they can never with any colour of reason expect, unless they could suppose their case *compassionable*: For none else but a *compassionable case* is so much as an *object of mercy*. But for such as these who harden themselves against all terms of mercy, when such terms have often and long been afforded them, together with great motives to persuade them to accept of them, and assistance to enable them to do so; how can it possibly be imagined that

that their case can be compassionable? May they not as well think the case of the Devils themselves compassionable? Yea, much better, who never had such tenders of mercy and recovery made them, nor rejected such terms as themselves have done.

Besides the administration of Justice in punishing obstinate Criminals, becomes a good and wise Governour as well as Mercy, towards those whose case is truly compassionable; and so it doth God in the administration of his Government. And if such Criminals as those I have now mentioned, be not the objects of God's severity, I think there will none be found throughout the whole Race of Mankind.

These things I have noted to shew for what reason we may conceive God in his wisdom doth not [though we should suppose that he could] cause the mighty motives of Religion to operate effectually upon the most refractory sinners, in a way of persuasion, without destroying that liberty which is essential to the will, so as thereby to bring them to repentance.

But

But though I need not such an argument, nor to lay any stress upon it, yet it is thought by some impossible in the nature of the thing, for that liberty which is essential to the will as such, to be preserved, and at the same time for the will to be irresistibly constrained; these being things inconsistent. And if so, then the will cannot be irresistibly forced, without altering the humane species by that very act. And if this should be true (and I cannot see how it can fairly be denied) it would be reason enough of it self to satisfie any Man, why God hath not thought fit to work grace in Men by an irresistible operation.

For if God should deprive Man of all liberty of will to chuse or refuse in things of a moral nature, and govern him meerly by his power, he would thereby take him from under his Government by Laws, and then there would be no place left either for Vertue or Vice, future Rewards or Punishments, as there is not among irrational Creatures, who are under no such Laws as Man is, having no such nature as Man hath. It is the *spontaneousness*, the voluntariness of an action as referring to a Law, that makes it vertuous or vitious, and

and ſo rewardable or puniſhable in another World. *If I do it willingly, I have a reward,* ſaith S. *Paul*: *Every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own luſt, and enticed,* ſaith S. *James*. It was no vertue in *Balaam* to bleſs *Iſrael*, ſo long as he did it only by conſtraint, no more than it was in his Aſs to reprove him. If you can ſuppoſe a Man to do any thing meerly by virtue of an extrinſecal power without him, without the leaſt conſent of his own will, that in a *moral ſenſe* is not the act of the Man, but is wholly owing to that power, by which it was neceſſitated to be done.

Men are too too apt to preſume unduly upon the goodneſs and mercy of God to their own hurt, and to think it inconſiſtent with his *natural goodneſs* being infinite, not to ſave them if he can. And therefore to undeceive Men in this matter, I have inſiſted the more on theſe things, and to ſhew how agreeable it is to the Divine Wiſdom, for God to withdraw his aſſiſtance from Men, after they have obſtinately perſiſted in refuſing and oppoſing it in its deſign upon them. And if it be agreeable to his Wiſdom, it cannot be diſagreeable to his Goodneſs: For it is as well goodneſs in God to controul Vice, as it is for him to encourage

courage Vertue, in what way, and by what methods ſeem beſt unto him.

There is a great deal of difference between true love and goodneſs, and *fondneſs*. Men by fondneſs love many times without reaſon, and beſtow their Favours more than becomes them. But true and generous goodneſs governs it ſelf by Wiſdom and Prudence, and ſo it doth in God. The Wiſdom of God will not ſuffer his goodneſs to throw away his ſaving benefits upon thoſe who by incapacitating themſelves to enjoy them, have rendred themſelves altogether unworthy of them. For it would diſparage the Wiſdom, and ſo the Goodneſs of God the Donor, in caſe he ſhould confer them upon ſuch, becauſe his different affection to evil and good, would be thereby in a great meaſure obſcured, and the ſinews of his Government weakned. *Honour is not ſeemly for a Fool*, ſaith the Wiſe-man, *Prov.* 26. 1. As it will not become the Fool himſelf, ſo neither will it become the wiſdom of him that confers it, to place it on one ſo uncapable of it as a Fool is.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

Of the after-assistance of the Holy Spirit, which those receive, who have been assisted already to perform the condition of the promise, as new beginners in doing so.

THose who have been assisted by God to repent, believe, and obey, and therein to begin their performance of the condition of the promise of pardon and life, do still stand in need of his further assistance to *persevere*, and to continue to do so to their lives end, and to do it more and more *excellently*. For as Believers hold their title in the benefits promised no longer than they continue to perform the condition on which the promise of them is made: so neither do they continue in the performance of that condition longer than they are assisted by God to do so. Now to persevere in performing the condition of the promise, is as necessary for Men to continue their title to the benefits promised,

ſed, as their performance of that condition at the firſt was to begin it.

For the promiſe runs thus: *He that ſhall endure to the end, the ſame ſhall be ſaved*, Matt. 24. 13. *And to him that overcometh and keepeth my works unto the end, will I give power over the Nations*, Rev. 2. 26. *But when the righteous turneth away from his righteouſneſs, and committeth iniquity, all the righteouſneſs which he hath done ſhall not be mentioned: In the treſpaſs which he hath treſpaſſed, and in the ſin which he hath ſinned, in them he ſhall die*, Ezek. 18. 24.

And as this perſeverance is neceſſary for the reaſon and end aforeſaid, ſo is *a conſtant and continual aſſiſtance from God* to enable the Diſciples of Chriſt ſo to perſevere. As the ſame power is neceſſary to continue the natural life, which firſt gave being to it, ſo is it in the ſpiritual life and ſtate alſo. *Ye are kept by the power of God through faith unto ſalvation*, 1 Pet. 1. 5. *Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jeſus Chriſt*, Phil. 1. 6.

And that which is very remarkable touching this After-aſſiſtance of which I ſpeak, is, That a greater preſence and

more constant assistance of the Spirit of God is promised and vouchsafed unto Men after they believe, than they had before. This appears by having *the Holy Spirit given them after*, in such a degree which they had not before; and by *God's dwelling, and the Spirit's abiding in them after*, who did not do so before.

First, Those who have believed the Gospel, and sincerely delivered up themselves to the conduct of it in their lives, do thereby come under that special priviledge of having the *Holy Spirit given them*, to assist, influence, and quicken them, and to carry on the work of Sanctification in them. This our Saviour promised, John 7. 38, 39. *Jesus cryed, saying, he that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water: This*, saith the Evangelist, *he spake of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive.* Acts 2. 38. *Repent and be baptized for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.* Which promises we find made good afterwards in several instances. Of the Believers it is said, *Acts* 4. 31. *that they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.* And *Acts* 5. 32. *We*, saith S. *Peter*, *are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Ghost, whom God hath given to them that obey him.* And S. *Paul* to the *Ephesians* saith,

faith, *After ye believed, ye were ſealed with the holy ſpirit of promiſe*, chap. 1. 13. that is, they were marked for his, and diſtinguiſhed from thoſe that were not, by his giving them the Spirit. *For if any man have not the Spirit of Chriſt, he is none of his*, Rom. 8. 9. *Senſual not having the Spirit*, Jude 19.

It is true indeed, thoſe firſt Chriſtians, and others after for ſome time, did receive the Holy Spirit in a ſenſe that was peculiar to thoſe times, for the confirmation and propagation of the Chriſtian Religion, until it was well ſetled, and had taken ſome rooting in the World. As when they were in an extraordinary way enabled by the Spirit to ſpeak with other Tongues, and to perform other miraculous operations, as our Saviour had foretold they ſhould. *For theſe ſigns*, ſaid he, *ſhall follow them that believe in my name; in my name they ſhall caſt out Devils, they ſhall ſpeak with new tongues*, &c. *Mark* 16. 17. A more full and particular enumeration of which extraordinary gifts of the Spirit ſcattered among the Believers of thoſe times, we have in 1 *Cor.* 12.

But beſides theſe, the Believers then received in receiving the Holy Spirit, an

increase of gracious qualifications, called the *fruit of the Spirit*, such *as love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, and temperance*, as the Apostle reckons them up, *Gal.* 5. 22. And in this sense the Holy Spirit hath been given to all true Believers ever since, and is now. *For if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his*, he is no true Christian, *Rom.* 8. 9.

By Mens having the Spirit then, and by the Spirit's being given them after they believe, is meant, I conceive, a more *constant*, and a more *plentiful* influence and effusion of the Spirit to change and renew them, to restore them to the likeness of God, to the spirit and temper of Jesus Christ, than ever was vouchsafed them towards their believing, or by enabling them to believe at first. Before Men repent, believe, or begin to obey, they have the Spirit at work in their minds indeed, to suggest to their thoughts and considerations, things of highest concernment to them, and to incline them to look after them in time, and before the day of Grace and Salvation is over and gone. He then at times stands at the door and knocks, and strives with every Man, and vouchsafes to such more and more of his assistance, until

until they are enabled to believe, who do not make fast the door against him, but rather open to him and refuse not to be led on by degrees. The more they attended to the teaching of the Father by his Spirit, and the nearer they came to believe indeed, the more frequent visits they had from him, and the more assistance. But after they have followed on so far, and become so teachable as to believe indeed and sincerely, to give up themselves to his conduct, then he communicates himself more freely and more constantly to them than ever before, in divine influence and assistance to root and establish them in the Christian Faith and Life, and to carry them on further and further towards perfection.

This, Secondly, is set out to us in another vein of Scriptures, *viz.* such as speak of *God's dwelling in true Believers*, and sincere Christians, and of their being *the temple of the Holy Ghost*, of which nature are many Texts, Rom. 8. 11. 1 Cor. 3. 16. *Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?* 1 Cor. 6. 19. 2 Cor. 6. 16. Eph. 2. 22. 1 John 3. 24. and 4. 13, 16. By all which is signified the *more constant residence of the Holy Spirit* in and with Men after they believe and become true Christians, to assist

them in their great affairs for their Souls and another World, as one that is never long absent from them, but ready at hand at all times to help them in doing their duty, and to overcome temptations, unless by grieving him, they cause him to withdraw himself. *If a man love me, he will keep my words: And my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him*, John 14. 23.

This giving of the Holy Spirit to sincere Christians to be *always with them* as his *dwelling in them* implies, is not only to help and assist them to persevere in doing only so much as will entitle them to pardon and life *barely*, as their performing the condition of the promise, though but in the lowest sense of performance will do: But God's design in giving his Spirit to them after they have perform'd the condition in the lowest sense, is to fit and prepare them for *greater degrees* of blessedness and glory, for a higher and more glorious exaltation therein, than a bare performance of the condition of the promise in simple consideration, and in the lowest degree of performance will well bear.

Our Saviour came, as he says, *that we might have life, and that we might have it in abundance*,

abundance; John 10. 10. not barely to ſave us, but to exalt us to ſuch a height of glory, that the glory and bleſſedneſs of his Body, the Church, might hold ſome good proportion with his own glory and bleſſedneſs, as Head of it. And to encourage true Chriſtians to endeavour to excel in holineſs and goodneſs, in order to this, there are other conditional promiſes made, beſides that of pardon and life upon condition of faith and repentance ſimply conſidered. To ſuch as *give all diligence* in *adding* to their Faith, Vertue, Knowledge, Temperance, Patience, Godlineſs, Brotherly kindneſs and Charity, ſo that theſe things be in them and *abound*, the promiſe is of an *abundant entrance* into the everlaſting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jeſus Chriſt, 2 *Pet.* 1. And he that *ſoweth bountifully ſhall reap bountifully*, 2 Cor. 9. 6. *And he that humbleth himſelf as a little child, the ſame is greateſt in the Kingdom of Heaven*, Matt. 18. 4.

Beſides, the *Veſſels of Mercy* will hold more or leſs glory, according to their different capacities in grace and ſervice, as they are made larger or leſſer. By how much the more near Chriſtians come to Chriſt in goodneſs, by ſo much they are qualified to be the more near to him in

happineſs and glory. But ſtill, as I ſay, this greater and more conſtant preſence of the Spirit is given to true Chriſtians after they believe, to carry on this great and glorious deſign of grace towards them, to take them out of the ſpirit of this World, and to lift them up in holineſs and goodneſs, thereby to make them capable of the greater glory and happineſs.

To make this plain and familiar to our thoughts, let it be conſidered, that upon Mens unfeigned believing, follows immediately their *adoption*. *As many as received him, to them he gave power, right, or privilege to become the ſons of God, even to them that believe on his name*, John 1. 12. This is a very great advancement indeed, and holds ſome proportion to that deep humiliation our Saviour underwent to prepare our way to it. Now thoſe whom God adopts to be *ſons*, thoſe he adopts to be *heirs* alſo to his great *inheritance* and glorious eſtate: So ſaith the Apoſtle, *if children then heirs, heirs of God, yea joint-heirs with Chriſt*, Rom. 8. 17.

This being their happy caſe; the bleſſed God and Father, who hath adopted the Believers for his Children and Heirs, gives them his Holy Spirit to be always with them,

them, puts his Spirit within them to tutor and diſcipline them, and to give them thereby ſuch breeding as may fit and prepare them for ſo high a relation, and for ſo glorious an inheritance as that is which he intends to ſettle upon them. *Becauſe ye are ſons, God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts*, ſaith the Apoſtle, Gal. 4. 6. Saint *Paul* having ſpoken of the happy ſtate which he, with other the Believers, expect and long for after the diſſolution of this earthly Tabernacle in which the Soul now dwells, 2 *Cor.* 5. ſaith in *verſe* 5. *Now he that hath wrought us for the ſelf-ſame thing, is God, who alſo hath given unto us the earneſt of the Spirit.* His giving them his Spirit to fit them for that inheritance, is an *earneſt* or pledge that he does really intend to beſtow it upon them. When he ſaith, He that hath wrought us for the ſelf-ſame thing is God, we hereby ſee that it is the Work of God by his Spirit to frame and faſhion the Believers for that magnificent eſtate in the next World which is prepared for them, and to which they are adopted. This work of God upon them, is *to make them meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in light*, Gal. 1. 12. Theſe Believers are thoſe *Veſſels of Mercy whom he thus afore prepares unto glory*, Rom. 9. 23. It is the benevolent

lent work and business of our Lord and Saviour by his Spirit, so *to sanctifie and cleanse* the whole Society of Believers, *that he may present them to himself a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle, or any such thing*, and to beautifie and adorn them as a Bride for such a Husband as Jesus Christ is, and will appear to be in the day of the manifestation of all his glory, that he may not be ashamed to own them for such.

And thus we see another of the ends for which Christians receive a greater and more constant presence and assistance of the Holy Spirit after they believe than they did before, is to fit and prepare them for greater glory and happiness than the lowest degree of performing the condition of the promise as at the first will make them capable of. We will now a little consider in what, or wherein the Holy Spirit doth assist the Believers, when they grow up thereby unto more perfection in the Christian Life.

One of the first things I conceive he does is, to *stir* them up *to*, and to *assist* them *in* making Prayers, and Supplications unto Almighty God, for the working in them that which is well-pleasing in his sight. For although God be ready to bless them

them with all ſpiritual bleſſings in Chriſt, yet not without being ſought unto to do it for them. And accordingly they are promiſed but upon that condition; *Ask and it ſhall be given you, ſeek and ye ſhall find*, Matth. 7. 7. Otherwiſe it will fare with them as it did with thoſe S. *James* ſpeaks to, *James* 4. 2. *Ye have not becauſe ye ask not.*

Now to the end therefore that Believers may receive ſuch an increaſe and growth in all Divine Vertues, as by means whereof they may live as becomes the Goſpel, and be made meet for the Celeſtial Glory, the Holy Spirit doth aſſiſt them to make *requeſts according to the will of God, and helpeth their infirmities*, when otherwiſe *they know not how to pray as they ought*, Rom. 8. 26, 27. *Almighty God poureth on them the Spirit of grace and ſupplication*, as the Prophet ſpeaks, *Zech.* 12. 10. He helps them not only to pray for ſuch things as they ought, but alſo in ſuch a manner as they ſhould, to wit, with a great ſenſe of their own wants, and of their own unworthineſs to obtain, and of the worth and excellency, and deſirableneſs of thoſe ſpiritual bleſſings they pray for. He helps them to pray with ſerioufneſs and devotion of ſoul,

and

and with an humble fervency accompanied with sighs and groans, which cannot well be uttered by them many times. He helps them also to pray in faith concerning the goodness of the Nature of God, and his readiness to give and to forgive; and concerning the prevailing intercession of Jesus Christ our blessed Advocate. God sends forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, *crying*, *Abba Father*, enabling them in their Addresses to God, to depend upon him as their Father, and humbly to expect to be used and dealt with by him in all respects as a Father, while they resolve and endeavour to carry it toward him as his Children.

And when the Holy Spirit enables them to pray thus, they may be said *to pray in the Holy Ghost*, as Jude 20. *to make prayers and supplications in the Spirit*, as *Ephes.* 6. 18.

And when the Holy Spirit hath thus holpen the Believers to seek those things of God which pertain to life and godliness, grace, strength, and ability to overcome corruptions and temptations, and to live a sober, righteous, and a godly life; then the Holy Spirit in way of return to such Prayers, doth *assist* them in their endeavours

vours in the *uſe of means*, to attain thoſe things they have begged of God. This we are well aſſured of by our Saviour himſelf, when we compare his ſaying as related by St. *Matthew*, with the ſame as related by S. *Luke*. In *Mat.* 7. 11. he ſaith, *If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more ſhall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?* Or how much more ſhall your heavenly Father give *his Holy Spirit to them that ask him?* ſaith S. *Luke* 11. 13. From both which compared, we learn, that God is moſt ready and willing to give thoſe that ſeriouſly ask them out of a ſenſe of their want of them, all Graces and gracious Qualifications and Diſpoſitions of the Soul, neceſſary to their pleaſing of God, by giving them his Holy Spirit to work them in them: Or that by giving them his Holy Spirit, he gives them all thoſe good things; becauſe when the Spirit is given unto Men, it is to work thoſe good things in them, by way of aſſiſtance.

This might be ſhewed in particular inſtances; I ſhall mention ſome. When we *crucifie the fleſh with the affections and luſts*, when we *cleanſe our ſelves from all filthineſs of fleſh and ſpirit*, when we *mortifie the deeds*

of

of the body, it is still by the help and assistance of God's Spirit that it is done, *Rom.* 8. 13. *If ye through the Spirit do mortifie the deeds of the body, ye shall live.* God's Spirit in his Servants *lusteth against the flesh*, as the flesh doth against the Spirit: It draws a contrary way, and therein prevails against the flesh. The flesh calls upon Men to be gratified in this and that, in things either unlawful in themselves, or in that degree which is unlawful. But the Spirit calls upon us, by exciting thoughts in us, to mind and regard our Souls, and by no means to wrong them by disturbing their peace, or hazarding their safety, to gratifie the flesh with momentany pleasures, which will leave guilt and trouble upon the mind, when they are vanished and gone themselves. And the Spirit by frequent prevailing herein, comes at last to kill this itch in the flesh.

Again, When the Believers Minds and Wills become more and more *reconciled to their duty*, and to be in love with it, in all the instances of it, both towards God and towards Men, it is still through the help of the Holy Spirit that they are so, 1 *Pet.* 2. 22. *Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit.* That they obey the truth in what it requires, it is through the

the Spirit, ſtrengthening and quickening them thereto, by making the motives thereto, preſent to their thoughts. In 2 *Chron.* 30. 12. it is ſaid, *That in Juda the hand of God was to give them one heart to do the commandment of the King and of the Princes by the word of the Lord.* The hand of God upon the heart, as well as the word of the Lord by the Miniſtry of Men, is that by which Mens Wills are bowed and inclined to what God commands. *He that keepeth his commandments, dwelleth in him, and he in him,* ſaith the Apoſtle, 1 *John* 3. 24. Our keeping the Commandments is an evidence of God's dwelling in us, becauſe it is the effect of his Preſence with us to aſſiſt us therein; he argues from the effect to the cauſe.

Again, It is the effect of the Holy Spirit's Preſence with Believers, and of his operation in them, when their Minds and Spirits become purified and refined from inordinateneſs of affection and unruline ſs of paſſion, until by degrees they are brought in ſome good meaſure unto *a likeneſs and conformity to the ſpirit and temper of Jeſus Chriſt*, whoſe Scholars they are. *They that are joined to the Lord are one ſpirit.* They mind, love, hate, and deſign the ſame things which our Saviour doth.

They

They participate of that love, gentleness, benignity and goodness which was so eminent in him (*the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth*, Ephes. 5. 9.) by which means they come to *be in the world as he was in the world*, as S. *John*'s phrase is. *Hereby*, saith S. *John*, *we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us*, Joh. 3. 24. It is so like him, that it must needs come from him, and if it be in us, it is because he dwells in us. *If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us*, 1 John 4.12. When we love one another as Christ hath loved us, when we are merciful, as our Heavenly Father is merciful, his love and goodness is so resembled by us, as that it is perfectly discernible in us.

Moreover the Holy Spirit is given to the Believers, to be with them, to strengthen them with resolution and courage to hold on their course of Holy living, and cleaving faithfully to Christ, notwithstanding all opposition and discouragement they may meet with from the World in doing so. To this end they are *strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man*, Ephes. 3. 16. *For God hath not given them the spirit of fear, but of power and love, and of a sound mind*, 2 Tim. 1. 7.

And

And not only ſo, but the Holy Spirit is given to the Believers to be always with them, to maintain and uphold in them *a comfortable and chearful frame of ſpirit*, and ſo to keep them *from fainting*, when they are *called to ſuffer* for the ſake of our Saviour, or his Truth, or Doctrine. And it is doubtleſs from this effect among others, of the Spirit's abiding with the Believers, that he is ſtiled *the Comforter*. And for the ſame reaſon principally, the joy which they have amidſt their ſufferings for righteouſneſs ſake, is called *the joy of the Holy Ghoſt*, 1 Theſſ. 1. 6. *having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghoſt*. And well may it be called the Joy of the Holy Ghoſt, becauſe ſolid joy under ſuch circumſtances, can proceed from no other cauſe but the Holy Spirit's operation. It is not the manner of the World as it is with Believers, to rejoyce in affliction, in wrongs and injuries, and hard uſage from Men: but the contrary; becauſe they have no principle in them, out of which ſuch a thing ſhould proceed. And therefore our Saviour ſaith to his Diſciples, *My peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you.* Joh. 14. 27. The Holy Spirit can raiſe joy, yea, great joy in the Souls of the followers of Chriſt when they ſuf-

fer never so hard measure from the hands of Men, so long as they know it is for their faithfulness to their blessed Lord and Master, who hath suffered and done so much for them as he hath done. The Spirit of God can so order their thoughts within them, that they shall not look upon themselves as disgraced thereby, but as highly honoured by their Master, by giving them both opportunity and courage to do him that honour when his Adversaries would cast reproach and shame upon him and his Cause, and all that appear for it. And thus the Apostles *when they had been beaten, departed from the Counsil, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Jesus their Lord*, Acts 5.41. The Holy Ghost can suggest to them also, that a great deal of good by such sufferings may be done to others in causing them to think the more and the better of the Christian Religion, when they see with what chearfulness the Professors of it can suffer for its sake. When the *Thessalonians* received the Word in much affliction, and yet with joy of the Holy Ghost, they became thereby *ensamples to all that believed in Macedonia and Achaia*, and from them and their deportment in suffering for the Gospel, *the word of the Lord sounded out, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also*

in

in every place their faith was ſpread abroad and talked of, 1 Theſſ. 1. 6, 7, 8. It was this joyous Deportment of the Primitive Martyrs in their Sufferings that tended ſo greatly to the increaſe and enlargement of the Church, as Hiſtory relates it did.

The Chriſtians then were enabled *to glory in tribulation* of this kind, in as much as they were guided to conſider that this *patient enduring* without repining, would give them *experience* of their ſincerity and fidelity in cleaving to Chriſt; and then this *experience* would give them *hope*, ſuch as ſhould not make them *aſhamed* through any diſappointment, but great confidence towards God of being accepted, *Rom.* 5. 3, 4.

And not only ſo, but alſo touching the greatneſs of the reward which is laid up in Heaven for ſuch; *a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* Upon account whereof our Saviour bids them to *rejoice and to be exceeding glad, yea to leap for joy in that day*, when they ſhould be perſecuted for righteouſneſs ſake, and have their Name caſt out as evil, and the like. When the Chriſtians were enabled *to ſuffer the ſpoiling of their goods*, yea, and of their Lives too, not only with patience, but alſo with *joyfulneſs*: When they were *as ſor-*

rowing, and yet always rejoycing; whence was this? And how can it be imagined that they should ever be able to do, and to be so, but that they *were strengthened with all might according to God's glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness*, as S. *Paul* speaks, *Col.* 1. 11. *The Spirit of God and of glory, then rested upon them*, as the other Apostle saith, 1 *Pet.* 4. 14. How came S. *Stephen* to stand with such an undaunted courage before the Council, as if his Face had been the Face of an Angel? Why it was because *he was full of the Holy Ghost*, he had a mighty presence of the Spirit with him to enable him thereunto.

S. *Paul* learned by experience, that as his Sufferings did abound for Christ, so *his consolations by Christ did abound also*, (2 Cor. 1. 5.) that *when he was weak, then he was strong*; that he had a mightier presence, a more powerful and comfortable influence of the Holy Spirit in times of great tryals and sufferings for Christ, than he had at other times. And this experience of his made him so far from being afraid of suffering, that for the sake of that wonderful comfort which was wont to come along with suffering, he was rather glad when suffering came, than any way dejected and cast

caſt down for it, 2 Cor. 12. 9, 10. *Moſt gladly therefore will I rather glory in mine infirmities, that the power of Chriſt may reſt upon me. Therefore I take pleaſure in infirmities, in reproaches, in neceſſities, in perſecutions, in diſtreſſes for Chriſt's ſake: for when I am weak, then am I ſtrong.* Their hope that God would make good to them his exceeding great and precious promiſes, was at ſuch time raiſed very high, made lively, vigorous and ſtrong, by the Spirit of God. *Rejoycing in hope*, ſaith S. *Paul* in one place; *abounding in hope through the power of the Holy Ghoſt*, in another, *Rom.* 12. 12. and 15. 13. When the Holy Ghoſt did put forth himſelf, did exert his power in raiſing the Chriſtians hope, it is no marvel then if they did abound therein; that is, that their expectations roſe very high, were vigorous and ſtrong, and very affecting, filling them with ſuch joy as overtopp'd, and in a great meaſure ſwallowed up the ſenſe of their Sufferings.

And thus I have endeavoured to ſhew how the Spirit of God doth aſſiſt the Believers to do more than meerly to perſevere and hold out in performing the condition of the promiſe under the ſoreſt trials and greateſt temptations to the contrary; for it enables them to glory and rejoice un-

der them, and so to be more than Conquerours, to fight the good fight of Faith, to finish their course, to keep the Faith, and all in order to their laying hold of eternal life.

To conclude then this matter: All these and other like Assistances, Influences, and Consolations of the good Spirit of God, by which the Believers are prepared for glory, are, I conceive, the things meant by S. *Paul* by that *Communion*, or rather *Communication of the Holy Ghost*, which he in his Apostolical Benediction seriously desired and invoked in the behalf of the Christians when he dismissed them thus; *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the Communion* or Communication *of the Holy Ghost, be with you all. Amen.* 2 Cor. 13, 14. For as he wished them the comfort and benefit that flows from the Grace or Charity of our Lord Jesus Christ, expressed in his Mediatorial performance, and from the love of God, from which that did proceed: So he did likewise the Communication of those Assistances and Graces of the Holy Spirit, by which they might be enabled to do their part in performing what was required of themselves in order thereunto.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Cautions against Mens depriving themselves of Divine Assistance, by running into two contrary extreams.

HAving thus far shewed, as well as I could, what Assistance Men receive from God, in performing the Condition of the Promise of Pardon and Life: it will be necessary now to add something by way of Caution.

1. To take heed not to *deprive our selves* of those benefits for the attaining of which, these Assistances are granted, nor of those *assistances themselves*, by *neglecting to do* what God expects we should do towards the working out our own Salvation (as we shall if we neglect to fall in with these Assistances) by endeavouring to do those things for the accomplishing of which, these Assistances are afforded us.

The very *Notion of aſſiſtance* implies in it, That thoſe who are aſſiſted by God, are *not meerly paſſive* in performing the Condition of the Promiſe, for the performance whereof theſe Aſſiſtances are vouchſafed us, but ſome way *active in that performance.*

God, doubtleſs, does expect, when he hath awakened in Men a ſenſe of their danger, by reaſon of ſin; and hath ſet before them what he hath done, and Chriſt hath done to reſcue and deliver them from it; and what muſt be done by themſelves to make them capable of the bleſſed Effects of our Saviour's performance in obtaining Pardon and Life; and what Aſſiſtance they ſhall have to that end, if they will but truly endeavour to do what they can do towards it: I ſay, when God hath ſet all this before them, he expects, That they ſhould put forth themſelves in Endeavours tending towards the performance of the Condition of the Promiſe. He expects they ſhould think on, and conſider thoſe things which he ſets before them, and, at leaſt out of regard to their own ſafety, to be moved thereby to make uſe of the means tending to enable them to perform the Condition of obtaining Pardon and Life,

Life, and to be doing what they well can do towards that performance.

Doubtleſs ſuch expreſſions in Scripture, as I ſhall now ſet before you, cannot ſignifie leſs than this. Ezek. 14. 6. *Thus ſaith the Lord God, repent and turn your ſelves from your Idols.* Ezek. 18. 30. *Repent and turn your ſelves from all your tranſgreſſions, ſo iniquity ſhall not be your ruine.* Verſe 31. *Caſt away from you all your tranſgreſſions whereby ye have tranſgreſſed, and make you a new heart and a new ſpirit, for why will ye die, O houſe of Iſrael?* Verſe 32. *I have no pleaſure in the death of him that dieth, ſaith the Lord God: wherefore turn your ſelves and live.* Can all theſe Expreſſions, can Mens repenting and turning themſelves, and their making them a new heart, poſſibly ſignifie leſs than *real endeavours* to do ſo? Again, Jer. 4. 4. *Circumciſe your ſelves unto the Lord, and take away the foreskin of your hearts.* Acts 2. 40. *Save your ſelves from this untoward generation.* And all the Precepts, Exhortations, and Perſwaſions in Scripture to repent, to believe, to obey, are of the ſame ſignification. Such, for inſtance, as, Acts 17. 30. *But now God commandeth all men every where to repent.* Chap. 2. 38. *Repent and be baptized.* Chap. 3. 19. *Repent ye therefore and*

and be converted; and the like. Theſe Scriptures imply, and ſuppoſe that Men can do ſomething towards repenting, towards turning themſelves and making them a new heart, or elſe we muſt ſuppoſe, That God commandeth, preſſeth, and perſwadeth Men to do that, towards which he knows they can do nothing. The latter of which to ſuppoſe, would be to ſuppoſe the Scriptures to make the ſame bad repreſentation of God with the ſlothful ſervant in the Parable, *viz.* That he is *a hard Maſter, expecting to reap where he hath not ſown, and to gather where he hath not ſcattered.* And who would not abhor to faſten that upon God, which is not conſiſtent with the Goodneſs of a Man? We know what is ſignified in *Pharaoh* to require the full tale of Brick, when he did not give the people Straw wherewith to make them. And God forbid we ſhould repreſent the good God to our ſelves in the likeneſs of *Pharaoh.*

Beſides, for any to ſay, That Men are wholly *paſſive* in performing the Condition of the Promiſe, is to lay a temptation upon themſelves and others, not to endeavour to perform it, nor to do any thing towards it. For who will attempt to do, or endeavour to do that which they believe

lieve impoſſible to be done by them? And for Men not to endeavour to do what they can towards the performance of that Condition, is the *directeſt courſe* they can take to *deprive* themſelves of that *aſſiſtance* from God, by which they might have performed it. *For from him that hath not, ſhall be taken away even that which he hath*, ſaith our Saviour, *Mat.* 13. 12. Him that hath not; that is, him that hath not uſed what he had; as we may ſee by him that had the one talent, and had it taken away, becauſe he did not uſe it. And that this is the meaning of thoſe words, *From him that hath not, ſhall be taken away that which he hath*, appears by our Saviour's next words, *Verſe* 13. by which he explains that ſaying of his: *Therefore ſpeak I to them in Parables, becauſe they ſeeing, ſee not; and hearing, they hear not:* Meaning, That they had, as it were, eyes, but did not ſee with them; and ears, but did not hear with them: that is, They had means by which they might have ſeen and heard, and underſtood ſo much as would have made them capable of further diſcoveries and aſſiſtances, but did not make uſe of them, and therefore thoſe farther diſcoveries and aſſiſtances were with-held from them, which yet were granted to the Diſciples.

What

What our Saviour here said in this matter, was in answer to a question of the Disciples, who asked him, saying, *Why speakest thou to them in Parables? Verse* 10. And his answer was, *Because it was not given unto them* (the disobedient Jews) *to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven*, as it was to the Disciples. And the reason why it was not given, was, as he shews, because they seeing, saw not; and hearing, heard not. They had eyes and ears to see and hear with, but did not use them for the ends for which they received them. They had not heard and learned of the Father by attending to, or regarding his methods of preparing Men for the Faith of the Gospel. They had not attended unto those things which natural Religion it self would have taught them, and which they might have seen by the natural light of their minds, as well as they saw external objects with the eyes of their bodies, if they had not shut them: Nor had they learned by his teaching them by *Moses* and the Prophets. And because they did not use what they had before, therefore it was that more Assistance was not given them to know the Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven. That this is the reason of it, is yet further

ther confirmed by what our Saviour ſaid, on the other hand, John 7. 17. *If any man will do his will*, (*i.e.* the Father's Will) *he ſhall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I ſpeak of my ſelf.* For by this we ſee, That if theſe Jews, to whom it was not given to know the Myſteries of the Kingdom, had been inclined and diſpoſed in their own minds by former motives, to have done the Will of God, which they already knew, as others of them were, it would have been given unto them as well as it was to the Diſciples, to have known thoſe Myſteries. The reaſon therefore why this further knowledge was not given them, was, Becauſe they had no mind to do what they had been taught by God; by a teaching antecedent to his teaching them by Chriſt.

By all which we may ſee, that Men cannot take a more direct courſe, as I ſay, to deprive themſelves of that Aſſiſtance from God, by which they might perform the Condition of the Promiſe, than by neglecting to do what they may and can do, through God's preventing Grace, towards that performance. And if ſo, then that Opinion muſt needs be of a very dangerous nature, that does incline Men to ſuch

ſuch a neglect: And yet ſuch is the Opinion, That Men are wholly *paſſive* in performing the Condition of the Promiſe. For what can be a greater check (as I have ſaid) to Mens endeavours to effect any thing, than an Opinion, That they can do nothing towards it. Men are very prone to govern themſelves, in acting or forbearing to act, by their Principles, and the notions they have of things: if theſe be corrupt, that which is the conſequence of them cannot be ſound. Mens errour in practice, is very much owing to the errour of their minds, and wrong Notions of things; *They do alway erre in their heart, for they have not known my ways*, ſaith the Holy Ghoſt, *Heb.* 3. 10. there the errour in life and practice begins. If Men have wrong Notions in their minds of God's ways and methods of proceeding with Men, in reference to their Salvation, it can hardly be avoided but they will more or leſs err in point of ſuch practice alſo, as is any way influenced by thoſe Notions. *If the light which is in you be darkneſs, how great is that darkneſs!* Matth. 6. 23.

Almighty God gives to every Man, from whom he requires Repentance and Faith, Ability to do ſomething towards it,

it, though not compleatly to repent and believe without further Aſſiſtance than that which he gives at the firſt. When Men therefore do but improve that little which they have, in doing that little which they can do towards their repenting and believing, God will vouchſafe them further Aſſiſtance and Ability to do yet more towards it; and if they do but improve that additional Ability to the doing yet more towards the ſame end, God will, doubtleſs, vouchſafe to ſuch, further and further Aſſiſtance, until they acquire thereby that true Faith and Repentance, on which Pardon and Life are promiſed. For ſo ſaith our Saviour, *Whoſoever hath, to him ſhall be given, and he ſhall have abundance*, Matth. 13. 12. *And to you that have, more ſhall be given.* And again, *With what meaſure ye mete, it ſhall be meaſured to you*, Mark 4. 24. All which ſayings ſeem to ſignifie, That, according to God's ordinary method of proceeding with Men, they ſhall have more or leſs Aſſiſtance from him, as they do with more or leſs care and diligence uſe what they have received already.

And as there is need for Men to be cautioned againſt neglecting to uſe what power they have towards performing the

the Condition of the Promise, in repenting and believing before they do repent and believe; so there is need likewise of cautioning others against neglecting to improve their Repentance, Faith, and Obedience, from a lower to a higher degree, from the state of Babes to a manly stature in Christianity. For there is a danger of abusing this comfortable Doctrine of Divine Assistance, to a spiritual Sloth, Idleness, and Negligence, and that under pretence of honouring God, and glorifying Free-grace; as by leaving all to be done by him, that he may have the honour of all. As if Men were not in confidence of God's Assistance, and so in the strength of the Lord, to run the race is set before them, but to be taken up into arms, and carried all the way to Heaven without their running or going.

Whereas when Men truly enter into the *Christian* state, and seriously set their faces for Heaven, they then enter into a spiritual warfare against the Flesh, World, and Devil; and they, as the Israelites, must fight for the promised Land before they enter it, though they receive it by promise as they did: they must *first fight the good fight of faith*, and then *lay hold of eternal life*. It is *he that over-*

overcometh, that ſhall inherit all things, Rev. 21.7. For Men not to ſtir up themſelves, not to gird up the loins of their minds to fight their way through to Heaven, but to reſolve to be *only paſſive*, under pretence, That the Captain of our Salvation might have all the honour of the Victory, would be much what as ridiculous as it would be for Soldiers in an Army to ſay they would leave it wholly to their Captain-General to fight for them while they ſit ſtill, that he might have all the honour of the Victory. The ability of God and our Saviour, to ſave, hath no other limits ſave what his Will, directed by his infinite Wiſdom, hath put upon it: but the Divine Will hath ſo limited this power, that the *promiſe of Crowning* is not made, but to ſuch as through ſtriving *overcome*.

All the Promiſes and Aſſurances we have of Divine Aſſiſtance, are, to encourage our diligence and induſtry in working out, and carrying quite through the buſineſs of our Salvation, and to overcome all that doth oppoſe us, or which any way tends to hinder us in it. Of this nature is that of St. *Paul*, Phil. 2. 12, 13. *Work out your own ſalvation with fear and trembling: for it is God that worketh in you, to will and to do of his good pleaſure.* God's

working in us, his readiness to assist us, is given as the motive and argument to perswade us to work out our own Salvation. If we do but put forth our selves to do what we can in doing our duty, though it be with fear and trembling, when we consider our own weakness, and the strength of the enemies we are to encounter and overcome in doing so, we are assured of this for our encouragement, That if we do so, we shall find an inward and secret assistance from God to fortifie our Resolutions, and to bring the same to good effect, so that all our spiritual Enemies shall not be able to hinder us, but that we shall still hold on our way, and grow stronger and stronger, as *Job* speaks of the righteous, and he that hath clean hands. God will not fail to add more strength to our willing and doing, in carrying on the Work of Grace, and so of Salvation, to a greater height, and more perfection, if we are but faithful, in endeavouring it our selves. *Be of good courage, and God shall strengthen thine heart,* saith the Psalmist, *Psal.* 27. 14. The motive wherewith to perswade Men to be of good courage, and firm resolution in the way of their duty, is, we see, because then God will strengthen their hearts; that is, will yield them more and further assi-

stance,

ſtance, and by that means make their duty more and more eaſie to them, as it muſt needs be, to the ſame degree their ſtrength is increaſed, by which it is to be done.

The Lord is ſo ready, nay, ſo certain to aſſiſt his ſervants in their faithful endeavours to do their duty, that they may be as ſure of it, and as much depend upon it, as if they had it in their own power. And therefore St. *Paul* exhorted the Chriſtians *to be ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*, Epheſ. 6. 10. As if they might reckon themſelves armed with his ſtrength, while they depend upon him for it in doing their duty. Which made St. *Paul* ſpeak ſo confidently, *I can do all things through Chriſt that ſtrengthens me*, Phil. 4. 13. And again, *If ye through the Spirit do mortifie the deeds of the body, ye ſhall live.* He accounted, That if they had any mind to mortifie the deeds of the body, they might be ſure of help from the Spirit wherewith to do it, when-ever in good earneſt they went about it.

But when Men think themſelves ſo ſure of being kept by the power of God, as that they grow careleſs and remiſs, as to their own endeavours of doing their du-

ty, and standing upon their guard against temptations, they many times slip into such ways and doings, by which the Spirit of God is *grieved*, and withdraws from them, and with-holds his quickning influences, and then they grow dry and flat, and unsavoury too, and fall even then when they thought they stood sure.

2. And the like may be said, touching the danger on the other hand also. *For when men have such an opinion of their own power and ability to perform the condition of the promise, as that they are not mindful of the Holy Spirit's assistance, nor sensible of their need of it, but are negligent in addressing to God for it, and in their dependance upon him for the supplies of it*, it cannot be expected, That the Holy Spirit should take any such pleasure in such Men, as to take up his residence, and make his abode with them. And if not, the communication of his assistance to such men must needs be more rare and more sparing, and his visits less frequent. And when they are so, it will be visible in the dulness, dead-heartedness, and barrenness of such Christians, though then they may retain a Form of Godliness.

For

For the Holy Spirit will not vouchsafe to such his special Presence and Assistance, who do not know their need of it, nor how to prize it. And accordingly our Saviour, speaking of the *Spirit of truth*, saith, *whom the World cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him*, John 14. 17. So that, it seems, Mens receiving the Spirit depends very much upon their knowing him in the usefulness and benefit of his communications, and valuing him accordingly.

So that we see there is danger of running into extreams on both hands; either in Mens pretending so much dependance upon Divine Assistance, as to neglect to do what they can do, towards performing the Condition of the Promise: or else in having such an opinion of their own power and ability to perform it, as to over-look, and neglect the Divine Assistance, as if they had little or no need of it.

Such as this latter sort are far from the mind of St. *Paul*, who was still careful to attribute his after, as well as his first Christian performances to Divine Assistance. *I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me*, Gal. 2. 20. *I laboured more*

than they all; yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me, 1 Cor. 15. 10. And again, *I will not dare to ſpeak of any of thoſe things which Chriſt hath not wrought by me*, Rom. 15. 18. *Not that we are ſufficient of our ſelves to think any thing as of our ſelves, but our ſufficiency is of God*, 2 Cor. 3. 5. And our Saviour taught his Diſciples to be of the ſame mind, when he ſaid, *Without me ye can do nothing*, John 15. 5.

And where Chriſtians are full of the ſenſe of their need of Divine Aſſiſtance, and accordingly highly prize it, ſeek it, and depend on God for it, and yet are withal as careful and diligent in their own endeavours, as if all the work lay wholly on their hands. Theſe are they the Holy Spirit delights in, and delights to ſpiritualize, to influence, quicken, and ſtrengthen, and to lift them up near unto Heaven, in preparing them for it. For thus ſaith our Saviour to his Diſciples, ſpeaking to them of the Spirit of Truth, whom the World cannot receive, becauſe it doth not know him; *but ye know him*, (ſaith he) *therefore he abideth with you, and ſhall be among you*: for ſo Dr. *Hammond* reads the place, *John* 14. 17. As if he had ſaid, becauſe ye know how to value his preſence and aſſiſtance, therefore you ſhall have it.

CHAP.

CHAP. IX.

Something of the grounds of incouragement, which ſuch have to expect aſſiſtance fully to perform the condition of the promiſe, as have not refuſed to make uſe of God's preparatory Aſſiſtance towards it.

THat God doth prevent all endeavours on our part of returning to him, by his applications to us to make us ſenſible of the badneſs and danger of our ſinful ſtate, to diſpoſe us thereby to hearken to his merciful terms of being delivered from it, before we our ſelves make any one ſtep towards it; I have ſhewed before. Now thoſe who have made ſo much uſe of God's preparatory aſſiſtance, as thereupon to become inquiſitive what they ſhould do to be ſaved, and deſirous to be taught. Theſe I reckon have encouragement to expect and hope to be further and further aſſiſted, until they are enabled fully to perform the condition of the promiſe.

1. For first our Saviour hath positively asserted, and that more than once, *that to him that hath, more shall be given, and he shall have abundance*, Matt. 13. 12. and 25, 29. Which can be understood, I conceive, of nothing more properly than of Divine Assistance: And so he, whosoever he be that hath had assistance from God towards performing the condition of the Gospel-Covenant, and hath made use of it by using endeavours towards such a performance, to him more shall be given, to wit, more assistance, until he have abundance of it, and of grace proportionably.

2. Those who have made use of God's preparatory assistance, *are given* by the Father to his Son Christ Jesus, to be assisted by him fully to perform the condition of the promise in believing and obeying the Gospel. And those that are given by the Father to the Son to be thus assisted, have great reason to be confidently persuaded they shall. For our Saviour hath said of such, *that he will in no wise cast them out*, but receive them as Disciples, and treat them as becomes such a Master.

That those who are given by the Father to the Son, are such as have made use of God's prepa-

preparatory aſſiſtance, appears by comparing our Saviour's words in *John* 6. 37. with thoſe in the 44. and 45. verſes. *All that the Father giveth me, ſhall come unto me*, ſaith he, verſe 37. And in verſe 44. he ſaith, *No man can come unto me, except the Father which hath ſent me, draw him:* And ver. 45. *Every man that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me.* Now if thoſe, and only thoſe come to Chriſt, whom the Father giveth him, then thoſe muſt needs be the perſons which are given to Chriſt, which are prepared by the Father; becauſe all theſe, and none but theſe come to Chriſt, according to our Saviour's words expreſly.

Now that the Father gives theſe to the Son for that end that they may be aſſiſted by him to perform the condition of the promiſe, will (I conceive) appear by what will follow by and by. The Father's giving theſe to the Son, doth not ſuppoſe them to have believed in the Son, when he gives them to him, but the contrary. For the Father's giving them to the Son, is antecedent to their coming to him: For Chriſt ſaith, all that the Father giveth me, *ſhall* come unto me, not *are* come unto me. And to what end do they come to him, but to learn of him, and be taught by him how

to

to be saved? *i. e.* to perform the condition on which Salvation is promised.

For that I take to be the meaning of the Father's giving these to the Son, *viz.* his committing them to him to be made Disciples by him, to be taught and enabled to do that on which Salvation is promised.

Not that the Father's thus giving these to the Son to be assisted by him, is so to be understood, as if the Father did wholly remit them to the Son, and did not still continue to assist them by the same Spirit by which he prepared them for him at the first. For that *faith* by which they perform the condition of the promise, is *the gift of God*, and those who are regenerated, *are born of God*; and *it is God that worketh in them both to will and to do*, even when they perform the condition of the promise in the best manner that ever it is performed. And accordingly we are to direct our Prayers to the Father for the Holy Spirit, and for all the assistances and fruits of it. But those prepared by the Father, are said to be given to the Son, in order to their being brought by him to believe the Gospel; because the dispensing of all Evangelical Assistances, and of all Gospel-grace, is committed to the Son; but yet

yet ſo as that the Father gives this by the Son, as the Son alſo does by the Holy Ghoſt.

For the better underſtanding of this matter we muſt know, that after our Saviour's Humiliation, came his Exaltation by the Father, who gave unto him as Mediatour God-Man, a Kingdom, glory and greatneſs, all power in Heaven and Earth, *he gave all things into his hands*, Joh. 3. 35. *committed all judgment to the Son*, Joh. 5. 22. The Father committed to the Son the whole Evangelical Oeconomy, the power of managing all affairs belonging to the being and well-being of the Church which he had purchaſed with his own Blood, over which he made him head; yea, head alſo over all things to the Church; for he made him Prince of the Kings of the Earth, the only Potentate, as the Scripture ſpeaks.

This authority and power is ſaid to be given to Chriſt, *becauſe he is the Son of man*, John 5. 27. that is, I conceive, becauſe he is the Meſſiah, to whom ſuch a Kingdom and Regal power was promiſed and foretold in the Prophets, under that denomination of the *Son of Man*. Thus *Daniel* ſaw in a Viſion *one like the Son of Man, to whom*

whom the Ancient of days gave dominion, glory, and a Kingdom, that all People, Nations, and Languages might serve him, Dan. 7. 13, 14. And *Son of Man* is the appellation which our Saviour as the Messiah, doth frequently give unto himself, as is recorded in the Evangelical History, and which S. *John* in his Book of *Revelations*, doth also more than once give him. And *Isaias* foretold concerning a *child that should be born, that the Government should be upon his shoulders, upon the throne of David, and upon his Kingdom to order and establish it for ever*, chap. 9. 6, 7. To which agrees that of the Angel to the Mother of our Lord, Luke 1. 33, 34. *The Lord God shall give unto him the Throne of his Father David, and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of his Kingdom there shall be no end.* All agreeing that this Kingdom, Government, and Power, should be administred by the Son of God in humane nature, and because he is the Son of Man.

Now in this gift of the Father, the giving such to his Son as he had prepared to become his Disciples, and to be made so by him, is included; they are part of the *all* things which the Father hath put into his hand. In giving him a Kingdom, he gives him a People to be his Subjects, whose good

good behaviour, and whoſe happineſs he is to provide for, and to promote by his ſpiritual Government. When the Prophet had ſpoken of God's ſetting his Son upon his holy hill of *Zion*, *Pſal.* 2. 6. in v. 8. he brings in God ſpeaking thus to him; *Ask of me, and I ſhall give thee the Heathen for thine inheritance, and the uttermoſt parts of the earth for thy poſſeſſion.* Theſe are prepared by the Father to become Subjects to the Son then when he gives them to him; but are actually made ſubject to his Spiritual Government by the Son himſelf, by his *going forth conquering and to conquer* by his Goſpel, it *is by his arrows the people fall under him.*

Now the Father's thus committing to his Son the power of managing all matters that concern the forming and perfecting one Chriſtian Church throughout the World, and ſo of diſpenſing all Aids and Aſſiſtances to that end, doth not imply or ſuppoſe the Father's relinquiſhing this power, but his doing all by his Son, as deſigning to intereſs the Man Chriſt Jeſus in all theſe great affairs. And thus when the Father ſends the Holy Spirit, by whoſe influences we receive our aſſiſtances, he then ſends him in the Name of the Son, as being concerned with him in ſuch ſending;

John

John 14. 26. *The Comforter which is the Holy Ghoſt, whom the Father will ſend in my Name*, ſaith our Saviour. And on the other hand, the Son when he ſends the Holy Spirit, he ſends him as from the Father who is always concerned alſo in ſuch ſending, John 15. 26. *When the Comforter is come, whom I will ſend unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he ſhall teſtifie of me.*

But as I ſay, the Father diſpenſeth the Influences and Aſſiſtances of the Spirit *by the Son*, as God-Man, now in the time of this Kingdom of his which the Father hath given him. Saint *Paul* ſpeaking of God's ſaving us by the waſhing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghoſt, which, ſaith he, he ſhed on us abundantly, *through* Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour, *Tit.* 3. 6. I thank my God always on your behalf, for *the grace of God which is given you by Jeſus Chriſt; that in every thing ye are enriched by him*, 1 Cor. 1. 4, 5. And becauſe theſe aids are thus diſpenſed by the Son, though from the Father, and by the Holy Ghoſt, they are called *the ſupplies of the Spirit of Jeſus Chriſt*, Phil. 1. 19. *And it is God that ſupplies all our need, according to his riches in glory*, but it is *by Jeſus Chriſt*, Phil.

Phil. 4. 19. And the Holy Spirit is ſtiled the *Spirit of the Son*, even then when he is ſent into our hearts by the Father, for the reaſon aforeſaid, *Gal.* 4. 6. And ſo for the gifts and graces of the Spirit, they are all diſpenſed by Jeſus Chriſt. *To every one of us* (ſaith S. *Paul*) *is given grace, according to the meaſure of the gift of Chriſt.* Epheſ. 4. 7.

All this I have noted, that we might the better underſtand for what reaſon and in what reſpect thoſe prepared to receive the Faith of the Goſpel, are ſaid to be given by the Father to the Son to work that faith in them: And it is becauſe in giving him the Mediatory Kingdom, he gives him the power of diſpenſing all thoſe Aids and Aſſiſtances, by which Men are made true and ſincere Chriſtians.

But to proceed yet a little further in this matter, the uſe of which, as to the principal ſcope of this Chapter, will be better diſcerned afterward: The reaſon why the Father confers this Regal Dignity and Authority upon the Son, and the power of ſending the Spirit, and of diſpenſing Aids and Gifts, is not only that *all men ſhould honour the Son even as they honour the Father*, which yet is one reaſon of it, *John* 5. 23.

Nor

Nor yet only as a reward of his deep humiliation, suffering, and obedience unto Death, which is another, *Phil.* 2. 9, 10. but also that God's great design of reforming the World by sending his Son into it, and of converting sinners to the faith and obedience of the Gospel, might by that means be facilitated, as tending to render Christ the more glorious, and the more attractive an object of Faith. It is by his being thus exalted, that Men are more especially brought to believe in him. It is *by him that we do believe in God that raised him from the dead, and gave him glory that our faith and hope might be in God*, 1 Pet. 1. 21. So that we see this glorious advancement of Christ, hath the nature of an *aid* in it to help us to believe.

The meanness of our Saviour's appearance in the World while he was in it, and his Crucifixion at the last, was that which prejudiced Men against both him and his Doctrine; it was their stumbling block, and that at which they were offended, and all through a mistake of the nature of Christ's Kingdom and Government: so that he had but very few Disciples at last, notwithstanding all his mighty Miracles and gracious Words. But when he was raised from the dead, and exalted in his Kingdom and Glory

Glory, and had given a powerful demonſtration of it by ſending the Holy Ghoſt, as he had promiſed he would, to enable thoſe that preached in his Name, and thoſe that believed in his Name, to do ſo many wonderful things in his Name as they did: This proof of his exaltation, in a ſhort time filled a great part of the World with Diſciples to him, and made Men flock by Multitudes into his Church and Kingdom.

This effect of his glorious exaltation, was foretold by the Prophets. *Thy people ſhall be willing in the day of thy power, more than the womb of the morning*, according to the marginal reading, *Pſal.* 110. 3. Theſe words *more than the womb of the morning*, ſeem to be Hyperbolical, to ſhew the vaſt numbers of Diſciples and Subjects, the day of Chriſt's Power and glorious Exaltation, ſhould procure him, even like the drops of the Morning-dew for multitude. The Prophet *Iſaiah* ſpeaking as it were to the Meſſiah, of whom he propheſied, ſaid, *Nations that knew thee not ſhall run unto thee, becauſe of the Lord thy God, and for the Holy One of Iſrael, for he hath glorified thee*, Iſa. 55. 5. That is the reaſon we ſee of the Nations running in unto him; it is becauſe Almighty God hath *glorified* him, *exalted*, *ex-*

tolled, and made him very high, as the ſame Prophet ſpeaks, *chap.* 52. 13.

When Men perceived that the God of Heaven ſo far approved of what Chriſt had taught, done, and ſuffered in the World, as to reward him for it with ſuch power and glory, this procured from them a belief of his Doctrine, and put a great reputation upon it: It raiſed in Men alſo a great expectation from him as from one that was very well able to prefer and reward his Friends and Followers, as he had promiſed he would.

We find that the ſending of the Holy Ghoſt, the pouring out of the Spirit in thoſe greater meaſures foretold by the Prophets, was deferred unto this time of the glorious exaltation of Chriſt. So ſaith the Evangeliſt S. *John* 7. 39. *The Holy Ghoſt was not yet given, becauſe that Jeſus was not yet glorified.* And the reaſon hereof was, that he might have the honour of ſending him, and of diſpenſing the aſſiſtances and manifold gifts of the Spirit, and thereby convince Men that he was the ſame which he always declared himſelf to be, the Son of God ſent down from Heaven. *If I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will ſend him unto you.*

you. And when he is come, he ſhall convince the World of righteouſneſs, becauſe I go to the Father, and ye ſee me no more, John 16. 7, 8, 10. Convince the World of righteouſneſs, that is, he ſhould convince them that Chriſt was no deceiver, as they accuſed him to be here on Earth, but the true Meſſiah, Son of God and Saviour of the World, as he had declared himſelf to be while he was here in the World. And this our Saviour ſays the Holy Ghoſt ſhould convince the World of, becauſe of his going to the Father: That is, by the Father's receiving him up into glory after his Reſurrection and placing him there in Royal Majeſty. This our Saviour ſays the Spirit ſhould convince the World of when he was come from him; and the event plainly declares how.

For within a few days after our Saviour's Aſcenſion into Heaven, and his enthronation there, he ſends down the Holy Ghoſt upon his Apoſtles that preached in his Name, and were his witneſs, and upon others alſo that believed in his Name, enabling them by the Holy Ghoſt to ſpeak and do ſuch things, as by hearing and ſeeing of which, great Multitudes were preſently convinced that Jeſus was the Chriſt, the true Meſſiah and Saviour of the World, a-

bout three thousand of them being baptized into this Faith the very same Day in which the Holy Ghost was thus sent by Christ.

For S. *Peter* discoursed to them of this wonderful event thus, *Acts* 2. 32, 33. *This Jesus* (of whom he had been speaking) *hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses. Therefore being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear.* The end and design of all which, was to convince Men that Jesus is the Christ of God; which was done by convincing them that God had thus exalted him and given this power of doing these wonders by the spirit he had sent. For that is the use S. *Peter* drew it to, *Verse* 36. *Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.*

Now this sending of the Holy Ghost was so necessary to qualifie the Apostles for the great work of converting the World by preaching Christ and his Doctrine, and for the procuring credit to be given to it, that our Saviour would not have them so much as set upon it, or go about

bout it, *but commanded them to tarry at Jeruſalem until they were endued with this power from on high*, Luke 24. 49. And the preaching of the Goſpel under this Qualification, was doubtleſs the preaching it *in demonſtration of the Spirit and of power*, which S. *Paul* ſpeaks of 1 *Cor.* 2. 4.

Now by this we ſee how thoſe aſſiſtances which Men receive in believing, and ſo in performing the condition of the promiſe, do depend upon the Father's giving all things into the hands of the Son: And how for that reaſon the Father gives ſuch as have been preparatively aſſiſted by him, unto the Son to be compleatly aſſiſted to perform the condition of the promiſe. And indeed the reaſon why ſo many turned to God in ſo little a time after Chriſt's Exaltation, than ever was known before, was becauſe thoſe aſſiſtances then diſpenſed by him, were more and greater than ever were vouchſafed the World before.

And leſt any ſhould be diſcouraged, or think their condition worſe than indeed it is, for that we have no ſuch external aſſiſtances by the ſending of the Holy Ghoſt, as Men in thoſe primitive times had, let this one thing be conſidered; That the Chriſtians now are as really aſſiſted by that

sending of the Holy Ghost which was in those times, as those were who lived then; supposing the truth of the History of it, of which there is no cause to doubt. For we have the same Gospel as they had, and that under the same evidence by which it was demonstrated to them to be from Heaven, and that the then glorified Jesus was the Author of it. And we may as truly be said to have Christ and his Apostles now in respect of external assistance, as the Jews in those times were to have *Moses* and the Prophets. For we have the same Doctrine which Christ and his Apostles preached, and many of the same Miracles which they wrought to confirm it, transmitted down to us by their Writings and unquestionable Tradition; and the Jews had *Moses* and the Prophets no otherwise in our Saviour's time, when he said they had *Moses* and the Prophets. The Miracles of the Apostles then, wrought the same effect, procured the same belief of their Doctrine, in many that only heard of them by credible Testimony, as they did in them that saw them done. We see our Saviour upbraided his Disciples for not believing matter of Fact, when testified to them by credible eye-witnesses. Mark 16. 14. *And he said to Thomas, blessed are they which have not seen, and yet have believed.* And when

S. *John*

S. *John* had written a Hiſtory of ſome of the ſigns or miracles which our Saviour did, he ſays, *Theſe are written that men might believe*, John 20. 30, 31. By this he ſuppoſed his written teſtimony, of what he had ſeen and heard, to be a competent ground of Faith in others. And St. *Paul* ſaith, *Hold faſt the tradition which ye have been taught, whether by word or our Epiſtle*, 2 Theſſ. 2. 15.

But although it is not neceſſary, That the ſame miraculous operations of the Holy Spirit, ſhould be repeated in every Age, to convince Men, That Chriſt, who was firſt crucified, is now advanced to the Throne of his Glory, and hath the power of ſending the Holy Ghoſt to confirm the Doctrine which was preached in his name by them who proved their miſſion from him by Signs and Wonders, and mighty Deeds which were done in his name: though, as I ſay, the repetition of theſe be not neceſſary in every Age, this having been done *once for all* in one Age, as St. *Jude* ſpeaks of the Faith *once delivered to the Saints*; yet the inward aſſiſtance by the Spirit, to cauſe the external aſſiſtances to operate the more effectually upon the mind, is ſtill neceſſary, and is ſtill continued in the Church. For in this

reſpect our Saviour by his Spirit as well as by his Word, is with his people always to the end of the World, as he promiſed he would, and as he promiſed his Spirit likewiſe ſhould. *I will pray the Father, and he ſhall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth*, John 14. 16. It was this preſence of Chriſt, I conceive, which St. *Paul* deſired might be and continue with *Timothy's* Spirit, 2 Tim. 4. 22. *The Lord Jeſus Chriſt be with thy Spirit.*

In this part of my Diſcourſe concerning Divine Aſſiſtance, I have endeavoured to ſhew, That our Lord and Saviour hath the power of diſpenſing Evangelical and Spiritual Aſſiſtances committed to him by the Father, and that that is the reaſon, why the Father is ſaid to give ſuch to the Son as have heard and learned of the Father. And now this high advancement of the Son, and his having all Power in Heaven and Earth given to him, leaves no place for us to doubt of his Ability to aſſiſt thoſe to the uttermoſt, who do not make themſelves uncapable of it, by refuſing to make uſe of it, and of the Father's preparatory aſſiſtance. And truly all ſuch have no more reaſon neither to doubt of our Saviour's willing-

neſs

neſs to aſſiſt them, than they have of his power, if theſe few things following be but duly conſidered.

1. That Kingdom, Glory, and Greatneſs fore-mentioned, and the power of diſpenſing aids and aſſiſtances is given by the Father to the Son for this very end among others, that he might uſe and manage all for the bringing Men, ſuch as the Father hath given him, to perform the condition of the Promiſe, in repenting, in believing and obeying the Goſpel, Acts 5. 31. *Him hath God exalted with his own right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remiſſion of ſins.* The Father advanced him to that high Honour and Dignity, that he might be a publick good to mankind, in aſſiſting them to perform the Condition of the Promiſe, as he had been before by his humiliation, for the obtaining of the Promiſe upon that Condition, That ſo he might be a compleat Saviour in ſaving us as well from ſin in the power and pollution of it, as from the guilt of it. *He aſcended far above all Heavens, that he might fill*, or fulfil, *all things*, Eph. 4. 10. That he might fully diſpenſe and beſtow what-ever is neceſſary to the perfecting of the Saints, and edification of the Body of Chriſt. The Apoſtle having ſaid,

Chap.

Chap. 1. 20, 21. *that God having raiſed Chriſt from the dead, ſet him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality and power, might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this World, but alſo in that which is to come; and having put all things under his feet;* then in *Verſe* 22, and 23. he ſays, *he gave him to be head over all things to the Church, which is his body, the fulneſs of him that filleth all in all.* He did not only give him to be the Head of his Church, but to be Head over all things to the Church, to the uſe and benefit of the Church; for the fulneſs of this power of his in the iſſue and benefit of it, runs in to his Church, for whom he received it, and in reſpect whereof, the Church is his fulneſs in a paſſive ſenſe: for it is he *that filleth all in all*, as St. *John* ſaith, *of his fulneſs we have all received, and grace for grace*, John 1.16. ſuch a fulneſs as holds ſome proportion with the fulneſs of ſuch a head: all the fulneſs wherewith all and every one of his Church are filled, is derived from him, it is all of his filling, and that as he is Head of the Church, and Head over all things to the Church.

For he is not only a political Head to the Church to govern it by Laws, but ſuch

ſuch a Head alſo as reſembles a natural head by way of influence, conveying, by his Spirit, a vital and quickning power unto all the members, to enable them to obey thoſe Laws. The whole body hath *from this head nouriſhment miniſtred*, as St. *Paul* ſhews, *Col.* 2. 19. Upon which account St. *Paul* could ſay, *I am able to do all things through Chriſt which ſtrengtheneth me. But without him* (as our Saviour told his Diſciples) *ye can do nothing.*

Now if all this fulneſs, all this power we have been ſpeaking of, was given to the Son, was put into his hands for that end, That he ſhould uſe it, and manage it in aiding and aſſiſting thoſe whom the Father hath given him, to perform the Condition on which Pardon and eternal Life are promiſed, there is no queſtion to be made of his willingneſs to uſe it to that end, eſpecially when we further conſider that which follows.

2. For, in the ſecond place, he is as faithful as he is able, faithful to uſe the fulneſs of his ſufficiency for the ends and uſes for which he received it, *He is faithful to him that appointed him, in all his houſe*, Heb. 3. 2. *Faithful is he that calleth you, who alſo will do it*, 1 Theſſ. 5. 24. *All*, ſaith

saith our Saviour, *that the Father giveth me, shall come unto me, and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out*, John 6. 37. When he was leaving the World, he could with all confidence say unto his Father, *I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do*, John 17. And if he did thus in the day of his humiliation and temptation, it cannot be thought but that he will likewise finish what the Father hath given him to do now in the day of his exaltation and power. Why do the Holy Angels sing, *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength?* But because he faithfully useth them for those noble and worthy ends for which he received them. Rev. 5. *When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and received gifts for men*, saith the Psalmist, *Psal.* 68. 18. he then *gave gifts unto men*, saith the Apostle, *Ephes.* 4. 10. When upon his glorious exaltation he had received the promise of the Father, to wit, the power of sending the Holy Ghost, he presently pours it out upon his Disciples, *Acts* 2. 33. what he receives for us, he will be sure to communicate to us. *If the clouds be full of rain, they empty themselves upon the earth*, saith the Wise Man, *Eccles.* 11. 3. for that is the end of their being so filled, to supply the necessities of the Inhabitants of the

the earth. They indeed do thus by a natural neceſſity; but our Saviour out of his fulneſs ſupplies the ſpiritual wants of Men ſpontaneouſly. Never was the kindeſt Mother more willing that her full Breaſts ſhould be drawn by her tender Infant, than our bleſſed Saviour is that we ſhould draw and derive from his fulneſs to the relief and ſupply of all our ſpiritual wants to make us good and happy.

To think or to ſuſpect that our Saviour ſhould with-hold any of that *aid* from Men which he hath received for them, and which is neceſſary to enable them to perform the condition of the promiſe, ſuppoſing them capable of it, would be highly to diſhonour him. It is a grievous thing among Men, to with-hold from the people, that which their extream neceſſity calls for, when it is in ones power to relieve them without injury to himſelf or to his, or to the publick. *He that with-holdeth corn, the people ſhall curſe him*, ſaith *Solomon*, *Prov.* 11. 26. The reverence which we owe to our bleſſed Saviour, and the aſſurance we have of his goodneſs and good will towards Men, will not ſuffer us once to think there is in him any thing of like nature. And if he himſelf threatned that unprofitable Servant in the Goſpel as he did, for

not

not using the Talent committed to him, to the end and purpose for which he received it, we may be sure he himself will be very far from not discharging the trust he hath received from his Father.

3. We have no reason to fear or to doubt but that that compassion and love towards us, and the longing desire our Saviour had after our Salvation, which made him willing to suffer so much as he hath, to obtain a conditional pardon for us, and a conditional promise of it, doth and will make him willing to *assist* all those in the performance of that condition, who have not, or do not make themselves uncapable of it, by not using, but opposing such preparatory Aids as have been afforded them. He who hath laid so costly a foundation in his own bloud, to make us good and happy, cannot, as we may well think, be wanting to build upon that foundation what is necessary on his part to compleat his design of grace and favour towards us. We cannot think he will be willing to lose all the cost he hath already expended towards the procuring of pardon and life for us, for want of doing that further for us, which he can with far more ease do, (if we have not made our selves uncapable of it) than what he hath done already.

Hath

Hath our bleſſed Saviour any thing to give us which is better than himſelf, or more dear to him? And if not, as doubtleſs he hath not, then we may confidently conclude, that that which put him upon giving himſelf for us, will not ſuffer him to keep back from us that which he can give us without any detriment to himſelf, or diſparagement to his Wiſdom, unleſs we have made our ſelves uncapable of it. As S. *Paul* ſaith of God the Father, he that ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how ſhall he not with him freely give us all things? So we may ſay of God the Son; he that ſpared not himſelf when we ſtood in need of a Saviour, but gave himſelf to death for us; how ſhall he not give us that alſo, which though it be leſs for him to give, yet is ſuch which in ſome ſort we ſtand in as much need of as we did of a Saviour, his aſſiſtance I mean. *If when we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled, we ſhall be ſaved by his life*, as the Apoſtle infers, *Rom.* 5. 10. " If meerly by Chriſt's dying for our ſins, " we were thus far reſtored to God's fa- " vour, as that he was pleaſed to propoſe " to us free and eaſie conditions of mercy " and pardon; much more eaſie will it

" be,

" be, and most agreeable to that former
" essay of his goodness, now he hath gone
" so far with us, to bestow on us also abi-
" lity to perform those Conditions (unless
" we have made our selves uncapable of it)
" since without such assistance, all the rest
" would signifie no more to us, than as if
" Christ had never died for us, nor than
" as if such Conditions had never been
" obtained for us, or proposed to us.

4. That plenitude of power and sufficiency lodged in our Saviour, to answer and to supply all the spiritual wants and necessities of Men, on whose behalf our Saviour took on him the great office of Mediator, will never turn to such an account of Glory, Honour, and Praise to God the Father of all Mercies, while it is restrained and kept back only within himself, as it will when communicated and given forth in the effects of it, to them for whose benefit he received it: Nor will it till then neither redound so much to his own honour as God the Father designed it should. And if not, how can we possibly think there should be any thing of unwillingness in him to afford all those his assistance to perform the condition of the promise, who do not refuse to make use of it?

For

For as it was the design of our Saviour in all the good he did to Men while he was in the World, to gain glory thereby unto his Father, so it was a great inducement to him to do that good, when he knew it would turn to such an account. *Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my Name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son,* John 14. 13. It was matter of great satisfaction to our Saviour when he was upon leaving the World, that he could say to his Father, *I have glorified thee on earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do,* John 17. 4. he took pleasure in doing that work for that reason, because he glorified the Father thereby. And we cannot think he is less zealous for the honour of his Father now he is so highly exalted by him, than he was in the day of his Humiliation and Temptation.

Considering then that our Saviour's assisting us to perform the condition of the promise, will in several respects bring in a great revenue of glory to God, as well as it will of good to Men, we may be confident that he will rather be grieved for that Men are no more forward to make use of his assistance, than any way backward to afford it them.

S. *Paul* thought it a prevailing Argument to obtain a liberal Contribution for the relief of Fellow-Christians, when he could say, it would both *supply the necessities of the Saints, and cause many thanksgivings unto God*, 2 Cor. 9. 12. Now our Saviour's assisting Men to perform the condition of the promise, will not only make *them* happy, but will also fill their Hearts and Mouths with many and many Thanksgivings unto God, for his Grace bestowed on them by Jesus Christ. And if so, we cannot doubt of our Saviour's willingness to assist all those who are any whit willing to be assisted. Charity in good Men will make them willing to engage in such an action as will both relieve Men, and procure many Thanksgivings unto God, tho' they do thereby to a degree empty themselves, and diminish of their own store. How much more then will that goodness in our Saviour, which is infinitely greater, dispose him to yield us his assistance to become good in performing the Condition of the promise, when he shall thereby both glorifie his Father, and make us happy, and procure to himself the satisfaction of doing all this good, and everlasting love and praise from those that are made happy by it; and all this too without any more

more diminiſhing of his own Riches, than when by a word of his Mouth he healed the Diſeaſed Bodies of Men.

5. The pleaſure which our Saviour takes in Mens becoming good, as they do by performing the condition of the promiſe, is a ground of great aſſurance, that nothing ſhall be wanting on his part, fully to aſſiſt them to perform that condition, that will conſiſt with his Wiſdom, and with the terms on which the Father will have Men to be ſo aſſiſted. The Prophet ſpeaking of the *Meſſiah*, ſaith, *He ſhall ſee his ſeed, and he ſhall ſee of the travel of his ſoul, and be ſatisfied*, Iſa. 53. To ſee the fruit of his Mediatory performance in Mens being recovered from being bad to become good, from Rebels to become obedient Subjects, yea, dutiful Children to his Father, and ſo Heirs of Salvation, is and needs muſt be matter of great ſatisfaction to the Soul of our Saviour, becauſe it is the very prize for which he ran, the deſign of his whole undertaking, as Mediatour. And therefore he cannot poſſibly be wanting in any thing that is but fit for him to do to help Men to become good, or to perform the condition of the promiſe, which is the ſame. We ſee by his weeping over *Jeruſalem*, how he is grieved when

Men refuse to make use of those helps and means of deliverance which he hath obtained for them at a costly rate; when they refuse to be holpen out of the Pit of Destruction, when help is offered them. By which we may easily judge how acceptable it is to him to help and *assist* them to get out of a sinful state, who have any mind to be so *assisted* by him.

These Considerations are enough and sufficient, I conceive, to satisfie us touching our Saviour's willingness to *assist* those to perform the condition of the promise, who do not remain unwilling to be so *assisted* by him, after what God has been doing in their Souls to make them willing: And greatly tend likewise to strengthen their faith in Christ, and to encourage their dependence upon him for all necessary supplies of *assistance* and *grace*, who have any mind to become good, or to increase in goodness, and to put forth their endeavours to that end.

THE END.